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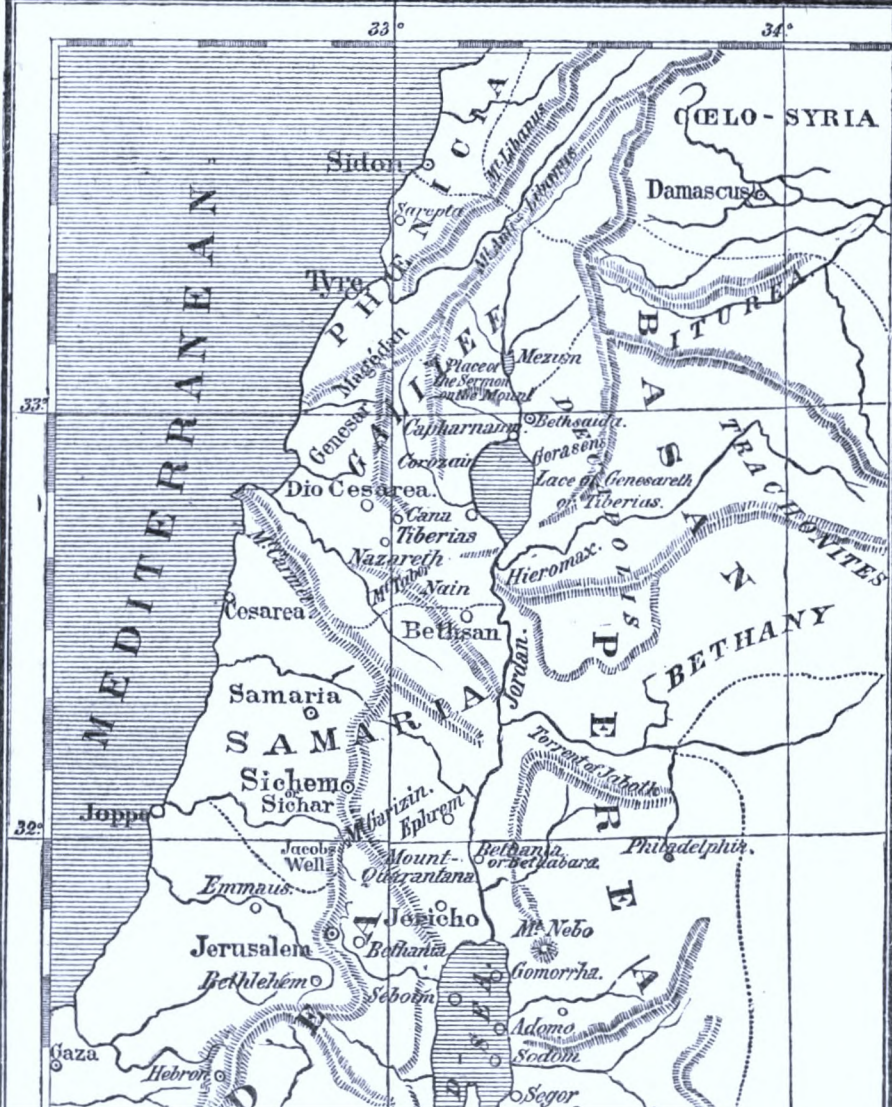
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*New Practical Meditations for Every
Day in the Year: From July to ...*

Bruno Vercruysse

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FROM

Rev. Gabriel Ryan

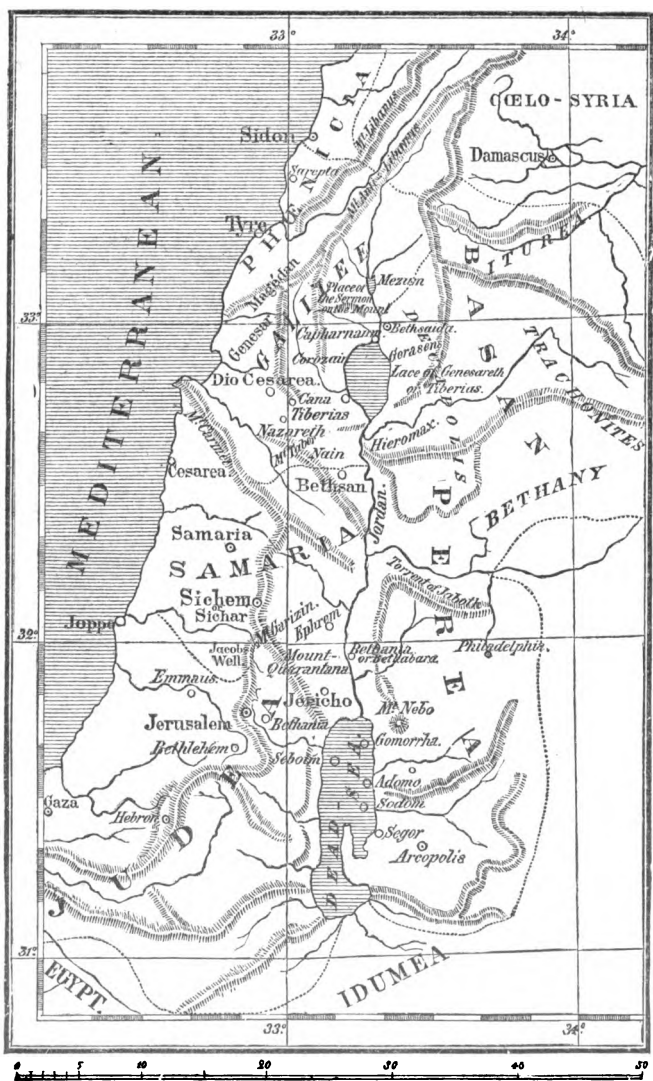
NEW
PRACTICAL MEDITATIONS
FOR
EVERY DAY IN THE YEAR



WITH THE APPROBATION OF
HIS EMINENCE,
THE CARDINAL ARCHBISHOP OF NEW YORK
WITH
APPROBATION
BY HIS EMINENCE,
VICTOR AUGUSTE, CARDINAL DESCHAMPS,
ARCHBISHOP OF MECHLIN, PRIMATE OF BELGIUM.

THESE Meditations, by the Rev. Father Bruno Vercruysse, of the Society of Jesus, are remarkable for the solidity of doctrine, the happy choice of subjects, and unctuous piety. The use of them can not fail to be very profitable to religious communities, to ecclesiastics, and to those pious persons in the world who aspire to perfection. Wherefore, we very willingly approve of the publication of this book, and are happy to be able thus to testify our esteem for the pious author.

† VTR. AUGUSTE,
ARCHBISHOP OF MECHLIN.



MAP OF PALESTINE.

NEW PRACTICAL MEDITATIONS

FOR EVERY DAY IN THE YEAR, ON THE
LIFE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

*Chiefly Intended for the Use
of Religious Communities*

BY THE
REV. FATHER BRUNO VERCRUYSSÉ, S.J.

THE ONLY COMPLETE ENGLISH TRANSLATION

*Published with the Approbation and
Under the Direction of the Author*

Enriched by several Novenas and Octaves; Meditations for the First Friday of every Month and for the Days of Communion; Exercises preparatory to the Renewal of Vows, and for a Retreat of Eight Days; a New Method of hearing Mass, and Practical Remarks on the different Parts of Meditations; a Plan of Jerusalem with a Map of Palestine.

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II.—FROM JULY TO DECEMBER.



NEW YORK, CINCINNATI, CHICAGO

BENZIGER BROTHERS

PRINTERS TO THE HOLY APOSTOLIC SEE

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Rev. Gabriel Ryan

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APPROBATION

OF THE

SUPERIOR-GENERAL OF THE MISSION OF NEW YORK AND
CANADA.

I very willingly recommend the translation of Father Vercruysse's excellent *MEDITATIONS*, published by Messrs. Benziger Brothers. I am confident that the use of them will prove highly beneficial to all who aspire to Christian perfection.

T. CHABAUX, S.J.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS OF THE VERY REVEREND SUPERIOR-GENERAL OF THE
SOCIETY OF JESUS, TO THE AUTHOR. TRANSLATED FROM THE
ORIGINAL LATIN.

ROME, 15 October, 1859.

REVEREND FATHER IN CHRIST:

P. C. I have received your valued letter of the 13th August, inclosing specimens of *MEDITATIONS*. I see, with pleasure, that you desire to devote the strength and leisure which yet remain to you to a work which is likely to prove of no common utility. I therefore recommend you to continue in all confidence what you have so ably commenced. I may add that the method pursued throughout in the sequence of the points of meditation appears to me satisfactory; and I have no doubt of its meeting the approbation of many readers. May God grant you strength and grace to bring to a favorable end the work which you have undertaken for His greater glory!

Recommending myself, etc.,

PETER BECKX, S.J.

ROME, 2 May, 1863.

REVEREND FATHER IN CHRIST:

P. C. From the perusal of various extracts from your *MEDITATIONS*, I am led to hope that they will one day effect great spiritual good. Persevere, therefore, Reverend Father, and, with the light and assistance of divine grace, perfect the work which you have undertaken.

Recommending myself, etc., I remain your servant in Christ,

PETER BECKX, S.J.

ROME, 17 November, 1870.

REVEREND FATHER IN CHRIST:

P. C. I congratulate you on the success of your book of *MEDITATIONS*, a third edition of which you are called on to prepare. The important improvements which you tell me you have made in the work, and the trouble you have bestowed on them, authorize the hope that proportionate benefits will result therefrom. I beg of God to enlighten and support you, and to preserve you in health, that you may labor with a generous heart to bring a work of such importance to the greatest possible perfection.

Recommending myself to your prayers, I remain, etc.,

Your servant in Christ,

PETER BECKX, S.J.

LATEST APPROBATIONS AND TESTIMONIALS.

BURLINGTON, June 18, 1875.

I take great pleasure in recommending the **PRACTICAL MEDITATIONS OF VERCROYSSÉ**, chiefly intended for Religious. They are really **PRACTICAL** meditations which ought to be in the hands of all persons consecrated to God by the vows of religion.

† LOUIS,
Bishop of Burlington, Vt.

VANCOUVER, W. T., July 6, 1875.

I have examined **VERCROYSSÉ'S PRACTICAL MEDITATIONS**, and have no hesitation in declaring it the best book of its kind in the English language with which I am acquainted, and destined to become with the Clergy and Religious here as general a favorite in its new dress as it is in Europe in the original.

† A. M. A. BLANCHET,
Bishop of Nesqually.

SHERBROOKE, 6th July, 1875.

Although the work of Father Vercroyssé is designed for Religious communities, I would recommend its attentive perusal to all those who aspire to Christian perfection. Allow me, therefore, to join my approval and recommendation to those of His Eminence the Cardinal of New York, and to those of the most Rev. Fathers Beckx and Charaux, S.J.

† ANTOINE,
Evêque de Sherbrooke.

ST. HYACINTHE, October 16, 1875.

I very willingly give my approbation to **FATHER VERCROYSSÉ'S MEDITATIONS**, and earnestly hope that they will meet with a favorable reception amongst all Catholics, and more specially amongst the English-speaking faithful of this diocese.

† L. Z. MOREAU,
Bishop of St. Hyacinthe.

PITTSBURG, December 1, 1876.

We have examined **VERCROYSSÉ'S MEDITATIONS**, and think they are admirably adapted to the purpose proposed by the pious author. We take pleasure in recommending them to other communities of our order.

SISTERS OF MERCY.

CONVENT OF THE IMMACULATE HEART, WEST CHESTER, PA., Dec. 18, 1876.

All our houses have in use the London translation of **Father Vercroyssé's Meditations**. I will, however, recommend to our local Superiors your edition of the same. They will all be pleased with the improvement in so valuable a work.

M. GONZAGA, C. J. M.

MADISON, N. J., January 1, 1877.

We are greatly pleased with the improvements of the present edition of an old friend, which we have used in most of our houses almost since its first appearance. I think it preferable to any other book of general meditations that has come under my notice for a long time.

M. M. XAVIER.

NAZARETH, NEAR BARDSTOWN, KY.

We are using this work in our Convents, and we consider the Meditations admirably suited to Religious communities.

MOTHER COLUMBA.

CINCINNATI, January 10, 1877.

We have been using **VERCROYSSÉ'S MEDITATIONS** for some time in our communities, and find them not only full of devotion, but especially most practical. We, therefore, earnestly recommend them to all the members of our Institute. Hoping that this valuable work may be widely circulated among the numerous religious orders of this country, we are

Yours respectfully,

THE SISTERS OF NOTRE DAME.

ST. CATHARINE'S CONVENT, NEW YORK, March 29, 1877.

We consider the **NEW PRACTICAL MEDITATIONS** by Father Vercroyssé, S.J., as excellent and useful to all devout Catholics. Some of the Meditations render the book peculiarly suitable to Religious communities, and those for the First Friday and for days of Communion form a valuable addition.

SISTERS OF MERCY.

PREFACE

THE attention of the reader is particularly requested to the following remarks, which are essential to the full understanding of the plan of the Meditations.

In these new practical Meditations which I offer to Religious Communities, I have taken the liberty of making a few innovations, the utility of which seems to me incontrovertible.

First. As to their sequence. I have not followed the order of the successive Sundays, or weeks, nor have I, on the other hand, taken the calendar as a guide; both of these plans appearing to me to be attended with much inconvenience.

I have, in preference, and after mature consideration, adopted an arrangement which, while free from the complications of either system, combines the advantages of both.

Thus, I divide the work into two volumes, each containing Meditations for six months. The first includes those from January to June; the second, those from July to December. The first volume follows the order of the calendar as far as the 4th of February, which is the earliest day on which Ash-Wednesday, the first day of Lent, can possibly fall; from that date the order of the Meditations corresponds with the course of the Sundays or weeks, as far as the Feast of the Sacred Heart.

But as Ash-Wednesday and the Feast of the Sacred Heart — which depends on it — may fall thirty-three days later, I have inserted, at the end of the first volume, an additional set of thirty-three Meditations, some of which may be used before Ash-Wednesday, while the remaining portion will come in after the

Feast of the Sacred Heart, thus completing, in every case, the number of days included in the first half-year. For instance, in 1874, Ash-Wednesday falling on the 18th of February, and the Feast of the Sacred Heart on the 12th of June, fourteen of the supplementary Meditations will be used before Lent, while the remaining nineteen will answer for the days immediately succeeding the Feast of the Sacred Heart. (See note, page 107, Vol. I.)

The second volume follows uninterruptedly the order of the calendar.

With regard to the arrangement of subjects, I do not consider myself bound to adhere as closely to the line I have selected as is customary with most authors of meditations on the Life of our Divine Lord. Believing that a certain degree of variety tends to awaken interest and to fix the attention, I have occasionally interrupted the course of the gospel narrative by meditations on the moral virtues, and the obligations of the religious profession; on the lives of the principal founders of religious orders; and on the leading festivals of the year. Some of the latter are preceded by Novenas, or followed by Octaves, none of which have hitherto been published. The holy season of Lent has been exclusively consecrated to the sorrowful Passion of our Lord. I believe, however, that in giving for each Monday a meditation on the necessity and practice of penance, I have acted in conformity with the spirit of the Church.

At the end of each volume will be found a meditation for the first Friday of every month — these days being specially consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus — six for the monthly spiritual retreat, and some others for the days of communion. The regular form in which I have given the points of the Meditations appears to me the most natural and the best calculated to assist the memory, while it is, at the same time, the easiest for those appointed to read them aloud.

The Affections and Resolutions are merely stated as briefly as possible. Many others will naturally suggest themselves to the minds of those who meditate; and these last are to be preferred, as they proceed from one's self, or from divine inspiration.

Should the subject-matter comprised in the three Points prove too long, as will happen when the time of meditation is limited to half an hour, it will be sufficient to dwell on the first two Points, or even on one with the addition of the Colloquy.

My readers will, I hope, approve of my plan of keeping invariably to the literal text of the Holy Scriptures, according to the best commentators; of avoiding all strained and improbable interpretations, and of exhibiting, as far as may be done in these short Meditations, the connecting links in the history of the Life and Acts of our Divine Lord.

Scattered through the work are a few short explanatory notes tending to elucidate difficulties, and to secure the practical fruit of the Meditations. It only remains for me to beg that God, through His infinite goodness, may confer His most abundant blessings on all who use these Meditations, and to ask a remembrance of the author in their pious prayers.

In communities of nuns, the sister whose office it is to read the points of meditation to the community, will do well to glance over the pages beforehand, in order that she may be prepared to substitute the feminine pronoun for the masculine without hesitation whenever it occurs. She will also use the word *sisters* instead of *brethren*, throughout the Meditation.

METHOD OF HEARING MASS; OR, PIOUS PRACTICES

By means of which you may derive great benefit from assisting at the Holy Sacrifice.

BEFORE MASS

On your way to the church, consider that you are going to Calvary, there to witness the most sublime and affecting spectacle that can be imagined, that of a God made man, who immolates himself on a cross, suspended between heaven and earth, in order to reconcile earth with heaven, and man with God. Consider with lively faith that the sacrifice of the Mass is the renewal of that of the cross, or rather, that it is, according to the Council of Trent, the same sacrifice, with this sole difference, that, on the altar, it is accomplished without the shedding of blood, and that consequently it produces the same effects, since the Victim and He who sacrifices are the same, Jesus Christ, who, by the ministry of His priests, offers Himself to God His Father.

These considerations should inspire you, while on your way to the church, with sentiments of reverence, confidence, and devotion.

Having entered the church, and chosen a place where you may be free from distractions, resolve to avoid those faults which you are liable to commit when assisting at Mass, and beg of God the grace to be faithful to your resolutions. You will then express your desire to attain the ends for which the Holy Sacrifice is offered, namely, to render to God the honor due to Him in acknowledgment of His supreme dominion over all creatures; to obtain from His infinite goodness mercy and forgiveness of your sins; to thank Him

for the innumerable benefits received from Him, and to implore a continuance of His favors.

DURING MASS

There are many ways by which you may secure to yourself the fruits of the Holy Sacrifice. Much latitude is left, on this point, to the devotion of the faithful. Some use the prayers for Mass to be found in any of the Prayer-Books, while others prefer to recite the Rosary or the Litanies, with pious exercises suited for every day in the week, or else the Office of the Dead, the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin, or that of the Sacred Heart. Choose those prayers which seem best to you, taking care, however, that these vocal exercises do not so occupy you as to exclude the consideration of the three principal parts of the Mass: the *Offertory*, *Consecration*, and *Communion*. Adopt for these precious moments some fixed practices of devotion, which may assist you to participate largely in the graces attached to them. A few may be here suggested.

1st. At the OFFERTORY. Whilst the priest elevates the Host on the paten, pronouncing the words, *Suscipe, sancte Pater, hanc immaculatam Hostiam*, "Accept, Holy Father, this unspotted Host," unite your offering to his; place yourself in spirit on the altar of sacrifice, and say from your heart, Deign, Heavenly Father, to receive the offering which I humbly make to Thee of my body and soul, with all their senses and faculties. They are the gifts of Thy bounty. To Thee do I surrender them, and I declare before the holy angels who now surround this altar, that I desire to use them only in conformity with Thy holy will made manifest in Thy commandments. My most fervent wish is to belong wholly to Thee, and to devote myself in all things to the advancement of the glory of Thy Holy Name, to the salvation of others, and to my own sanctification. Sustain me by Thy grace, I

entreat Thee, O Father of Mercy! that I may persevere to my last breath in these dispositions. Having thus prayed and offered yourself to God, make a brief examination, considering how far your conduct has hitherto corresponded with the profession you have just made, in order that you may henceforth prove more faithful.

2d. The CONSECRATION or ELEVATION. At this solemn moment, when the priest elevates before the congregation the Divine Victim concealed under the appearance of the consecrated Host, contemplate with lively faith your beloved Saviour, as He was beheld by those who had nailed Him to the cross, covered with blood and wounded for your sins, and in the midst of His agonizing pain, forgetting Himself to plead your cause with His Father, and to implore pardon for you in that cry which He uttered from His heart, *Pater, dimitte illis*. "Father, forgive them."

This contemplation should inspire you with lively sentiments of admiration, love, and gratitude, with horror of sin, contrition, and boundless devotion.

Having expressed these sentiments, unite with Jesus in the prayer which He offered to His heavenly Father on behalf of all mankind, contemplate in succession the five wounds, which are, as Saint Bonaventure says, "so many places of refuge, so many voices raised in supplication, to intercede for us," and at each one ask some particular grace or favor.

At the wound of the right hand: Pray for the Sovereign Pontiff, and for those bishops, priests, and missionaries who labor under his direction for the salvation of souls, that their zealous exertions may be crowned with the fullest success. At the wound of the left hand: Pray for the conversion of heathens, Jews, heretics, and schismatics, and for the return to God of all bad Christians who are in league with hell against Jesus Christ and His holy Church. At the wound of the right foot: Pray for the members of

your family, beginning with those most closely connected by affinity; for your benefactors and friends; and likewise, as Christ ordains, for your enemies. At the wound of the left foot: Pray for the souls in Purgatory, particularly those who have most claims on your charity. At the wound of the heart of Jesus: Pray for yourself: place in that heart, burning with love, all your cares, troubles, fears, hopes, and desires.

By adopting the habit of thus offering your petitions in a certain order, corresponding with the five wounds of our Divine Lord, you will always be able, in a few moments, and without effort, to offer an universal prayer, pleasing to God, and most beneficial to your neighbor and yourself.

3d. The COMMUNION. On those days when you have not the happiness of approaching the holy table, you should not neglect to make a *spiritual communion*, which, according to Saint Teresa, "is sometimes as advantageous as actual communion." This consists in forming in your heart with great devotion, three acts namely, an act of contrition, as nearly perfect as possible; an act of charity or love of God; and an act of ardent desire to approach the Holy Communion and derive from it the abundant graces which it confers on those who prepare to receive it worthily.

AFTER MASS

Examine briefly:

If you have followed exactly the preceding counsels.

How you have employed the intervals of time which separate the principal parts of the Holy Sacrifice.

If you have been careful as to your exterior deportment, and vigilant in avoiding distractions.

If all has been well done, return thanks to God; if otherwise, ask pardon for your negligence. Before leaving the holy place, beg of Jesus to bless all your occupations during the coming day, as well as the good resolutions that you have made during morning prayer or meditation.

REMARKS ON THE CONSIDERATIONS AND APPLICATIONS

IN order that this may be a book of Meditation, and not merely of spiritual reading, you should pause and reflect after each sentence of the Considerations and Applications, as if it were a separate paragraph. Your own reflections will enlighten and affect you more closely than any that can be suggested to you.

REMARKS ON THE AFFECTIONS

You should not be afraid of enlarging and dwelling upon the pious Affections which are merely indicated herein. By this means the fire of divine love is enkindled and kept up, the Meditation rendered profitable, and the spirit of fervor maintained during the day. Many other Affections and Resolutions will suggest themselves, and these latter will be so much the better, as they will have come either from one's own devotion or from the inspiration of God.

REMARKS ON THE RESOLUTIONS

We should not rest satisfied with making the Resolutions as given. We should endeavor to insure our fidelity to them by considering the motives likely to make the deepest impression on us; such as, 1st, The great advantages to be derived from their accomplishment in the present and in the future; 2d, The claims of justice and honor—the end of our creation and of our vocation—the solemn engagements of baptism and religious profession—our expressed resolution to aim at perfection; 3d, The facility of the practice of virtue—only a few trifling efforts are required of us, some slight sacrifices, alleviated by the unction of divine grace; 4th, The happiness to be found in the practice of virtue. What satisfaction do we not experience after we have made an effort or a sacrifice for God's sake! What consolation awaits us at the hour of death! and, lastly, The necessity of saving our souls. *One thing is necessary*, says our Lord, that is, that I should sanctify myself and save my soul, and the Resolutions that I have made must assist me materially in attaining this end.

REMARKS ON THE COLLOQUIES

These Colloquies may be multiplied and addressed, according to each person's devotion, or the inspiration of the moment, to others besides those suggested. In the final Colloquy it will be desirable to offer to God the practical resolutions for the coming day, and to beg earnestly the grace to be faithful to them. A great and very general fault is that of not making *practical resolutions for the day* or of not *asking grace to keep them faithfully*, as if, through our own strength alone, we could hope to do so. The Meditation should conclude with the recital of the *Pater Noster* or the *Ave Maria*.

PRAYER BEFORE MEDITATION

My Lord and my God, I believe that Thou art here present, and that Thou dost now behold me. I adore Thee. I acknowledge myself unworthy to appear before Thee. Nevertheless, full of confidence in Thy infinite goodness, I dare to ask the grace to pass this hour (or half-hour) of meditation in such a manner as may tend to Thy glory and my own spiritual advancement. Enlighten my understanding, touch my heart, and strengthen my will, that I may increase in knowledge and love of Thee, and serve Thee henceforth with greater fidelity. I ask this grace through the intercession of the most Blessed Virgin, of my holy patron, and my guardian angel.

We should join our own efforts with prayer, and to this end adopt the means and employ the practices recommended by masters of the spiritual life.

MEANS.— Seriously prepare the Points of meditation, as if you were to propose them the following day to others. Think of them after you have retired for the night before sleep comes on. Recall them to mind on awaking in the morning. During the visit to the Blessed Sacrament and at morning prayers, beg the grace to meditate well. Before reciting the preparatory prayer, ask yourself, "Before whom am I about to appear? and for what purpose?" Finish the meditation with a *Pater Noster*, and a short examination on the causes which may have led to its failure or success.

PIOUS PRACTICES.— When, through serious indisposition of mind or body, you find yourself incapable of applying to a regular meditation or contemplation, you may rest satisfied with reviewing beforehand the different duties in which you are to be employed during the day, considering how you can best fulfill them in a manner pleasing to God and edifying to others, resolving to perform them thus, and asking God's blessing on each one of them. You may also complain to God, as you would to your director, of your inability to meditate, of your miseries, which you may enumerate, of your many failures in the practice of virtue, mentioning them in detail. If thus humbling yourself and realizing your own nothingness, you terminate your prayer with an intimate conviction that you are unworthy of even the lowest place or the meanest employment in the house, and if you are perfectly satisfied to endure reproof and mortification, you will have made a very good meditation. "*Ex fructu arbor agnoscitur.*" "By the fruit the tree is known," says our Lord. (St. Matt. 12: 33.)

MEDITATIONS

ON THE

LIFE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

JULY 1

SECOND EASTER AND SECOND YEAR OF OUR LORD'S
MINISTRY *

MIRACULOUS CURE

OF THE PARALYTIC AT THE POOL OF JERUSALEM

1st Prel. Imagine you hear Jesus saying to the man paralyzed for thirty-eight years, "Take up thy bed, and walk."
2d Prel. Beg for unshaken confidence in the goodness of Jesus Christ.

POINT I

OUR LORD TAKES NOTICE OF THE PARALYTIC

CONSIDERATION.—"After these things," says St. John, (that is, after the cure of the issue of blood, the two blind men, and the deaf and dumb,) "was a festival-day of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem." (St. John 5:1.) He went to celebrate the Pasch publicly for the second time. From this Pasch began the second year of His ministry. He chose to inaugurate it, if we may so speak, by a wonderful

* In this second half-year, which, by a fortunate coincidence, begins with the second year of the preaching of our Lord, we follow the order of the Calendar.

miracle, which will form the subject of our meditation. At one of the gates of Jerusalem there is, says the Evangelist, "a pond, . . . which in Hebrew is named Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of sick, of blind, of lame, of withered, waiting for the moving of the water. And an angel of the Lord descended at certain times into the pond, and the water was moved. And he that went down first into the pond after the motion of the water, was made whole of whatsoever infirmity he lay under. And there was a certain man there that had been eight-and-thirty years under his infirmity." (St. John 5: 2-5.)

APPLICATION.—Jesus Christ, being the sovereign lawgiver, was not bound to observe the Jewish Pasch, but yet He did so. This should teach us how faithfully we ought to observe the laws, the rules, and the established customs of our community. In certain cases, we might lawfully claim exemption from them; but let us rather keep them from love of regularity, and to give edification. And this will be very meritorious before God. Is this your habitual practice? Our Lord teaches us another lesson. When He arrived at Jerusalem, He chose to remain among those that were afflicted, and singled out the most wretched of them all. Do you follow your Divine Master in this respect? Whom do you prefer among those committed to your care? Is it the most forsaken? Is it those who stand in need of especial care? Or is it not those rather by whose qualities or natural gifts you are attracted? Examine yourself. Be on your guard against yourself.

AFFECTIONS.—Regret for past failures, an ardent desire to imitate your Divine Model henceforth with more fidelity and generosity.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will distrust those motives which natural feelings may suggest to lead me to exempt myself from ordinary observances, or to induce me to attach myself to any particular individual.

POINT II

JESUS CURES THE PARALYTIC

CONSIDERATION.— Jesus, touched with compassion when He saw a man who had lost the use of his limbs for so many years, saith to him, “Wilt thou be made whole?” The poor man thought the question was one of reproach, and answered, “Sir, I have no man when the water is troubled to put me into the pond. For whilst I am coming, another goeth down before me. Jesus saith to him, Arise, take up thy bed, and walk.” (St. John 5: 6–8.)

APPLICATION.— It is a great consolation to learn that it was the excess of the paralytic's misery which drew the attention of our Lord to him in preference to so many others. Far be, then, from us all thoughts of discouragement or distrust at the sight of our miseries and our spiritual infirmities, however great or deeply-seated they may be. Let us go to Jesus, guided and supported by the hand of our spiritual director, that “faithful friend” whom the paralytic stood in need of, and we shall obtain the cure of our spiritual diseases. But after we are cured, let us remember what our Lord said to the paralytic, “Thou art made whole; sin no more, lest some worse thing happen to thee.” (St. John 5: 14.)

COLLOQUY with our Merciful Saviour; ask Him to cure not only your corporal maladies, but also your spiritual infirmities.*

* See Vol. I., Meditation for January 2.

FEAST OF THE VISITATION

1st Prel. Imagine you see our Blessed Lady entering the house of Zachary, to visit St. Elizabeth.

2d Prel. Beg for grace to pay all your visits in the same spirit in which our Lady paid hers.

POINT I

MOTIVES OF THE VISIT

CONSIDERATION.— St. Luke, after having related the history of the Incarnation, in which the account of the miraculous conception of St. John the Baptist occurs, immediately adds these words: “And Mary, rising up in those days, went into the hill-country in haste, into a city of Juda, and saluted Elizabeth. . . . And Mary abode with her about three months.” (St. Luke 1: 39, 40, 56.) Why did our Blessed Lady undertake this painful journey, which occupied four days? The Fathers tell us it was done — 1st, in obedience to inspiration; 2d, from courtesy, that she might rejoice with Elizabeth, her near relative, in the great miracle wrought in her favor, and which the Archangel Gabriel had revealed to her; 3d, in charity, that she might be a help to Elizabeth in a time of difficulty, and cooperate in the sanctification of her child.

APPLICATION.— Religious are sometimes obliged to pay visits and make journeys, and to many these have proved occasions of sin and of final ruin; and this because they were too frequent and were undertaken from vanity, from a weariness of retirement, from a desire of pleasure. Be on your guard against these motives: let your visits be always regulated by *obedience*, by *courtesy*, or by *charity*, and they will be always useful to your neighbor and yourself. Have you acted always on these principles? Have you not sometimes

concealed your real motives when you gave your reasons to your superior? Have you presumed permission to make these visits? Have you always tried to spread, as the Apostle says, the good odor of Christ?

AFFECTIONS.— Beg the grace to comprehend and profit by these words of a celebrated author: “Each time that I have been amongst men, I have returned less a man.”

RESOLUTIONS.— On returning from visits, even those undertaken with the best intentions, I will examine my conscience in the presence of God, particularly with regard to my conversation.

POINT II

THE FRUIT OF THIS VISIT

CONSIDERATION.— Mary brought joy and happiness with her into the house of Zachary. Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost; the mystery of the Incarnation was revealed to her, and she prophesied; the child whom she carried in her womb was cleansed from original sin, confirmed in grace, endowed with the use of reason, and thus rendered capable of gaining merit. Mary was present at his birth, and she obtained for his father a restoration of his speech, and he began to prophesy. There was a universal joy, shared in by all their neighbors. Elizabeth had foretold it when she cried out, “Whence is this to me, that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?” (St. Luke 1:43.)

APPLICATION.— Blessed is the house and happy is the soul which the Mother of God deigns to visit. The Son delights to honor His Mother by pouring an abundance of graces on those who have an especial veneration for her, and who strive to propagate her devotion. From what we have just seen, it is manifest that God wills that we should obtain every thing through Mary.

If you desire that she should often visit you, honor her, and draw others to honor her as much as you can. Examine whether on this point you can improve, and let your zeal be redoubled.

AFFECTIONS.— Beg of the Blessed Virgin to obtain for you that you may increase daily in filial piety and active zeal.

RESOLUTIONS.— To profit by every opportunity of spreading the practice of devotion to Mary.

POINT III

THE VIRTUE AND MERIT OF THIS VISIT

CONSIDERATION.— If it be a truth that our virtues increase in proportion to the acts of virtue that we practice, what great merit Elizabeth must have obtained by the visit of Mary to her. For in her all virtues were shining in their splendor. She possessed faith, obedience, mortification, fervor, modesty, generosity, and zeal, and especially humility and charity. She, the Mother of God, had come to congratulate Elizabeth, as if the latter were superior to her in grace and favor; then she waited on her for three months as a humble servant. She had heard herself called “Blessed among women;” but she instantly attributed all that had been accomplished in her to God only. “Fecit mihi magna, qui potens est.” “He that is mighty hath done great things to me.” (St. Luke 1:49.) The whole Magnificat breathes forth a perfume of wonderful virtue.

APPLICATION.— Reflect upon these virtues in detail, and try to reproduce them in yourself; this is the best way to please our Lady. You will thus deserve her visits, and gain great merit.

COLLOQUY with the Blessed Virgin.

ON THE GREAT PREROGATIVES

OF OUR BLESSED LADY

- 1st Prel.* Imagine that you see our Lady at the moment when, having been congratulated by St. Elizabeth, she says these words, "He that is mighty hath done great things to me."
2d Prel. Beg the grace of understanding the privileges which were given to Mary before, during, and after the Incarnation of the Word.

POINT I

PRIVILEGES GIVEN TO MARY BEFORE THE INCARNATION

CONSIDERATION.— Mary was destined for the greatest of dignities, and, as says St. Thomas, God, who always proportions the gifts of His grace to the dignity to which we are called, conferred upon her privileges which no one can ever share. Many of the Fathers point out twelve principal ones, represented by the twelve stars surrounding the marvelous woman spoken of in the Apocalypse. Four of them were given before the Incarnation of the Word: 1st, preservation from original sin in her conception; a privilege which the Church has proclaimed as a dogma of faith under the title of the Immaculate Conception; 2d, plenitude of grace, with which she was invested from her entrance into life; 3d, the use of reason given to her at the same time, that she might correspond with grace; 4th, knowledge of the great value of virginity, to which Mary at the age of three years bound herself by vow at her presentation in the Temple.

APPLICATION.— We should often unite in spirit with the angels, the Church, and all the servants of our Lady, to congratulate her on the wonderful prerogatives with which it has pleased the Almighty to endow her. This will be sure to please her, and dispose her heart more

and more toward us: it will be a means of obtaining special graces, more particularly that of persevering in our vow of chastity, and of a continual increase in perfection before God and men, after her example.

AFFECTIONS.—"Rejoice, O Queen of Heaven! because He that is mighty hath done great things to thee."

RESOLUTIONS.—To endeavor to acquire increased devotion to the most holy Virgin.

POINT II

PRIVILEGES GIVEN TO MARY AT THE INCARNATION

CONSIDERATION.—The first of these privileges, and the one dearest to the heart of Mary, was that, in becoming a mother, she still remained a virgin; she had the joys of maternity and the glory of virginity at one and the same time. The second was, that for nine whole months she entirely possessed the Son of God incarnate in her virginal womb. He lived by her and with her. The third, that while for nine months the body of the Word made flesh grew within her, Mary, in the same proportion, received a continual increase of grace. The fourth, that she became the channel of the grace which God of his goodness wishes to bestow on men; a privilege which the Church seems to acknowledge when she salutes Mary by the title of "*Mater divinæ gratiæ, ora pro nobis.*" "Mother of divine grace, pray for us."

APPLICATION.—While meditating on the wonderful privileges of our dearest Mother, and especially on the last we have mentioned — that she is the channel of grace which falls from heaven upon earth — ask yourself if your devotion and your habit of having recourse to our Lady is all it should be, or if it is not capable of a great increase, and if this be not the reason why you

make so little progress, and have such little success in your works of zeal.

AFFECTIONS.—"O Mary, my Mother! teach me to love thee!" (B. Claver.)

RESOLUTIONS.—To apply to myself the words of the blessed John Berchmanns, "I will tremble for my salvation until I can acquire true devotion to Mary."

POINT III

PRIVILEGES GIVEN TO MARY AFTER THE INCARNATION

CONSIDERATION.—First privilege: she was exempted from the curse which fell on sinful Eve—"In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children," (Gen. 3: 16,) in consequence of her Immaculate Conception. Second privilege: she was made worthy to bear the title, which no other can, of cooperatrix in the redemption of the human race. Third privilege: when her life on earth was ended, she had none of the suffering or the regret that other human beings have; her death was a transport of love. Fourth privilege: she was carried to heaven by the angels not only in soul, as the saints are, but in body and soul, clothed with all the gifts of immortality.

APPLICATION.—You can have a large share in these privileges of our Lady. Be zealous in bringing back lost sheep to the fold of Jesus Christ, and you will really cooperate in the work of redemption. Endeavor to live like a true religious, and you will certainly share the joys of heaven in body and soul with Mary.

COLLOQUY with the most Blessed Virgin. Congratulate her. Take part in her joy and happiness. Thank her for the favors she has obtained for you. Beg of her to continue her protection.

HYPOCRISY AND JEALOUSY

OF THE PHARISEES

1st Prel. Imagine you hear Jesus replying to the false accusations of the Pharisees.

2d Prel. Ask for a humble and compassionate heart.

POINT I

THE PHARISEES ACCUSE THE DISCIPLES OF JESUS

CONSIDERATION.—Jesus, having fulfilled all the paschal duties, left Jerusalem and returned into Galilee. “And it came to pass,” says St. Luke, “on the second first sabbath that as He went through the corn-fields, His disciples plucked the ears, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands.” (St. Luke 6: 1.) The law expressly allowed this to be done, (Deut. 23: 25;) but the Pharisees, who prided themselves on their exact observance of the sabbath-day, condemned it as a crime, saying, “Behold thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do on the sabbath-days.” (St. Matt. 12: 2.)

APPLICATION.—It is easy to see through the cloak of zeal under which the Pharisees tried to hide their jealousy; and every one condemns and detests their conduct. But as this hideous passion easily finds access into the hearts even of religious, we should see whether we can discover any marks of it in ourselves. The following are some of them: Narrowly to observe the conduct of those we dislike, to spy out their actions, relate their slightest faults with malice and exaggeration, to judge them harshly, to put an evil interpretation on all their actions, even their intentions. Find out from these signs what you ought to think about yourself.

AFFECTIONS.—Ask of God, through self-knowledge,

a horror of jealousy, and a charitable and compassionate heart.*

RESOLUTIONS.—Accustom yourself to praise God for the good done by others.

POINT II

JESUS DEFENDS HIS DISCIPLES

CONSIDERATION.—The accusation made by the Pharisees was likely to bring discredit on the disciples, and to strengthen the people in an erroneous belief. Our Lord therefore enlightened them, defended His disciples, and put their accusers to silence. “And He said to them, Have you never read what David did, when he was hungry, and they that were with him?” And then He continued, “The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath; therefore the Son of Man is Lord of the sabbath also.” (St. Mark 2: 25, 27, 28.)

APPLICATION.—We should learn from this that we may keep silence when personally attacked, but not when the glory of God, the rights or doctrines of the Church, or the welfare of our neighbors, are in question. To be silent, then, when we can answer the accusation, would be a withholding of the truth, and cowardice, and would in some cases cause us to share in the guilt. “There is,” says the Wise Man, “a time to keep silence, and a time to speak.” Happy is he who has learnt this wise discernment, and rules his life accordingly. How have you acted? Have you not been generally more prompt and eager in defending your wounded self-love than in supporting and defending the cause of God?

AFFECTIONS.—Ask of God the zeal and knowledge

* See Vol. I., January 7.

requisite to defend the truth when necessary, and to render it triumphant.

RESOLUTIONS.— To study, and seek to acquire information only for this end.

POINT III

JESUS CONFOUNDS THE PHARISEES

CONSIDERATION.— Our Lord, wishing to let the Pharisees see that He could read the secrets of their hearts, and that He well knew they were actuated by jealousy only, said to them, “If you knew what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, you would never have condemned the innocent.” (St. Matt. 12: 7.)

APPLICATION.— Let us take care never to deserve a similar reproof; never to speak or act from secret malice hidden under the garb of virtue; never to observe the letter rather than the spirit of God’s commandments and our rule; never to be harsh and unmerciful in our judgments of our brethren, blaming and condemning them on slight grounds or from appearances only. Examine yourself on these points, acknowledge and lament over the faults you may have committed; and that you may not fall into them again, beg earnestly of our Lord to increase in you fraternal charity and humility.

COLLOQUY with our Divine Redeemer.

THE CHOICE AND VOCATION OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES

1st Prel. Imagine you see Jesus Christ at the moment when He proclaims the names of the twelve Apostles.

2d Prel. Beg for grace to correspond faithfully to the grace of vocation.

POINT I

OUR LORD'S CHOICE OF HIS TWELVE APOSTLES

CONSIDERATION.—The Lord began the second year of His ministry by an act of the greatest importance for the future. He founded the Apostolic College, and thus laid the foundation of His Church, which was to perpetuate His mission among men. “He called unto Him His disciples, and He chose twelve of them, (whom also He named Apostles :) Simon, whom He surnamed Peter, and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alpheus, and Simon who is called Zelotes, and Jude the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, who was the traitor.” (St. Luke 6: 13–16.)

APPLICATION.—From out of the numerous disciples who followed Jesus, He chose twelve only — a mystical number, typified seventeen centuries before by the twelve princes or chiefs of the twelve tribes of Israel. Glorious and happy was the lot of those whom the Son of God chose out by a grace of predilection. He chose twelve “whom He would Himself.” (St. Mark 3: 13.) Let us rejoice with them and for them; and let us rejoice also because our Lord has chosen us in preference to so many others who were more worthy.

AFFECTIONS.—Humble gratitude for the grace of our vocation, with an ardent desire to remain faithful to it until death.

RESOLUTIONS.— To say frequently with the Apostle, “By the grace of God I am what I am.” (1. Cor. 15: 10.)

POINT II

CIRCUMSTANCES OF HIS CHOICE

CONSIDERATION.— Our Blessed Lord made an extraordinary preparation for this choice. The evening before, “*Exiit in montem orare: et erat pernoctans in oratione Dei.*” “He went out into a mountain to pray, and He passed the whole night in the prayer of God.” (St. Luke 6: 12.) Had He any need of this retreat, of this night-long prayer that His choice might be a good one? No, answers St. Ambrose; but it was His will to give us an example, and to teach us an important lesson.

APPLICATION.— Our Lord thus teaches us by His example — 1st, never to undertake any important matter without taking counsel of the Father of Lights, without earnest prayer; 2d, when we pray, to withdraw as much as possible from the world, from the turmoil of life. How have I followed this divine teaching? In what way can I, or ought I, to amend my conduct?

AFFECTIONS.— Pray for prudence and discretion in the management of all affairs intrusted to you, that you may act always and in all things in conformity with the holy will of God.

RESOLUTIONS.— In all doubts and difficulties, have recourse to prayer, and to those whom God appoints to direct you.

POINT III

PARTICULARS OF THIS CHOICE

CONSIDERATION.— Most singular and inexplicable does it appear to us to find among the chosen twelve

the traitor Judas. Was our Lord, then, deceived in him, or did He really call him to the apostolate? Interpreters tell us that our Lord chose Judas because He earnestly desired to have him for an Apostle. Judas ruined himself by his treason; but our Lord still chose him, to teach us that a man who has received the most excellent gifts of God has still the power of using or abusing them as he chooses, and that those who are called to the holiest state may still be lost, and ought therefore to work out their salvation with fear and trembling, as St. Peter tells us; and it teaches us that a man who has received the most excellent gifts of God has still the power of using or abusing them as he chooses, and that those who are called to the holiest state may still be lost, and ought therefore to work out their salvation with fear and trembling, as St. Peter tells us; and it teaches us to distinguish between the individual, and the body, of which he is member, between the office and the man.

APPLICATION.—We ought to derive great profit from these lessons for ourselves and for the instruction of others. To those who fear God, says the Apostle, all things work together for good; the treachery of one should make us tremble and distrustful of self; the perseverance of the others should give us great confidence in the omnipotent grace of God.

COLLOQUY with the holy Apostles Sts. Peter and Paul. (Seventh day of the Octave celebrated in their honor.)

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT:

“BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT”

1st Prel. Imagine you see Jesus seated on the mountain, and giving the wonderful lessons of His Gospel to the world.

2d Prel. Beg for grace both to receive and understand the Gospel teaching, and to induce others to receive it.

POINT I

CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE SERMON

CONSIDERATION.—Our Lord chose the twelve Apostles, “that He might *send them to preach*,” (St. Mark 3: 14,) and thus transmit by them or their successors in the apostolate, His divine doctrines to all nations and all generations. He immediately began to teach them what they were to say. When He came down to the foot of the mountain, where the people could see and hear Him, He found “a very great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem, and the sea-coast both of Tyre and Sidon.” He had drawn them thither by His Providence, to accomplish His will of having many witnesses to the truth that the doctrine preached by the Apostles and their successors was indeed His Gospel, the pure word of God, without any intermixture of human teaching. “And when He was set down, His disciples came unto Him.” (St. Matt. 5: 1.) He began to speak, and delivered a long discourse called the Sermon on the Mount, which contains in substance the law of God, and all evangelical perfection.

APPLICATION.—Let us show our gratitude to God, who allowed us to be born in the bosom of the Catholic Church, the only guardian of the eternal truth taught by the Son of God. Whoever makes it, then, the rule of his life shall be saved. As religious, we have con-

tracted an obligation of observing it more perfectly than the rest of the faithful. Happy indeed are we to be bound by such an obligation. It will win an immense increase of glory for us in heaven. Have you been faithful to this obligation?

AFFECTIONS.—Gratitude, an ardent desire to attain a high degree of evangelical perfection.

RESOLUTIONS.—To call to mind frequently the words of our Divine Master, “Be ye therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect.” (St. Matt. 5:48.)

POINT II

TEACHING OF JESUS CHRIST ON POVERTY FIRST BEATITUDE

CONSIDERATION.—Our Lord commenced His discourse by laying down the principles of true happiness. These had been corrupted by pagan vices and Jewish prejudices as they now are by a proud and sensual world. And there is a great contrast between the beatitudes which the world proclaims, and those of Jesus Christ. The world says, “Blessed are the rich;” our Lord says, “Blessed are the poor;” not exactly the poor by birth, but poor in spirit, detached in heart and mind from the possessions of earth for the love of God. Why are they blessed? “Because,” says our Lord, “theirs is the kingdom of heaven;” because even in this life, having neither fear nor anxiety, they are in peace, which is a foretaste of heaven.

APPLICATION.—Among the poor whom Jesus Christ calls blessed we can distinguish three classes: 1st, the actual poor, perfectly resigned to the will of God; 2d, the rich who are really poor in spirit; 3d, the voluntary poor, who have stripped themselves forever of all things, to follow Jesus Christ in poverty. To this latter class we have the happiness to belong; and to it especially belong those wonderful promises

of our Lord, as we learn from the words, "There is no man who hath left house or lands for My sake, and the Gospel, who shall not receive an hundred times as much now in this time, and in the world to come life everlasting." (St. Mark 10: 29, 30.) These words ought to fill our hearts with holy joy and courage.

AFFECTIONS.—Thank our Lord, who has enabled you to comprehend holy poverty, to love it, and to embrace its practice.

RESOLUTIONS.—To endeavor that our poverty may prove a treasure to us, through our fidelity in observing its least rules.

POINT III

TEACHING OF JESUS CHRIST ON RICHES

CONSIDERATION.—Our Lord's teaching upon poverty showed plainly enough what we ought to think about riches, and those who cling to them as their dearest possession. But lest we should not fully understand this, He added these terrible words, "Wo to you that are rich; for you have your consolation," (St. Luke 6: 24;) meaning that they are so entirely taken up with material enjoyments that they live in complete forgetfulness of their last end, and at length death comes suddenly upon them, they are destitute of merit, loaded with sins, and they fall into eternal misery.

APPLICATION.—Look around you, and see what is passing in the world. Do you not see this condemnation of our Lord verified? Let it teach you, then, the unspeakable favor that God has done you by withdrawing you from the world; show Him your gratitude and redouble your zeal to undeceive those whose desire for temporal enjoyments is drawing them away from the path of salvation.

COLLOQUY with the holy Apostles whose Octave we celebrate.

ON RELIGIOUS POVERTY

1st Prel. Imagine you hear Jesus saying, "Blessed are the poor in spirit." (St. Matt. 5:3.)

2d Prel. Ask for grace to love and esteem holy poverty.

POINT I

EXCELLENCE OF RELIGIOUS POVERTY

CONSIDERATION.—The strongest proof we can have of the excellence of religious poverty is, that our Lord set a great value on it, and chose it Himself for the companion of His whole life, from the cradle to the grave. He highly exalted it, saying, "Beati pauperes spiritu." He gave it to us as a counsel, and has promised great rewards to those who practice it. It was highly valued by the first Christians following His example, and then, as time went on, by all the Saints, especially the founders of religious orders, who, together with their numberless followers, bound themselves by vow to live in perpetual poverty, knowing from the teaching of the Church that a vow increases the merit of the practice of poverty.*

APPLICATION.—Let us strive to renew our esteem and love of holy poverty; far from being ashamed of it before men, let us glory in it, and try to make the lovers of this world understand the folly and disappointment of the pursuit of riches; and how noble and wise a thing it is to exchange the fleeting and perishable possessions of earth for the eternal treasures of the world to come.

AFFECTIONS.—Thank God who has taught you to appreciate, love, and embrace the practice of holy poverty.

RESOLUTIONS.—To endeavor to lead others, particularly persons in the world, to esteem this virtue.

* See Vol. I., January 4.

POINT II

ESSENCE AND SPIRIT OF RELIGIOUS POVERTY

CONSIDERATION.— The essence of religious poverty, or of the vow of poverty, consists in having nothing of our own, that is, independent of our superior; therefore it follows that a religious can not, without sinning more or less grievously, receive, give, exchange, or lend any thing without permission from his superior. He, on the other hand, being but the administrator of the property of the community, can not dispose of it either to inferiors or strangers, but according to the spirit of the rule and the greater good of the community.

APPLICATION.— Have we always thus understood and practiced holy poverty? Have we not sometimes infringed the rules under vain pretexts, at least in small matters? Let us be on our guard; for these little transgressions will easily lead to great ones, under some delusion or other. But religious, who are alive to their true interests, will not be contented with the essence of poverty; they will look to its perfection, the spirit of poverty. The religious who is penetrated with it looks on poverty as his inheritance; far from taking offense at a refusal, or of murmuring when he has to suffer privation, he thinks himself too well treated, because he has the poverty of Jesus Christ always before his eyes. He takes great care of every thing given for his use, and he receives with humble gratitude, like the beggar who lives upon alms, the food and clothing which is bestowed on him. He feels himself to be unworthy of them, because he has so often abused the gifts of his Creator.

AFFECTIONS.— Pray earnestly for the spirit of evangelical poverty.

RESOLUTIONS.— To endeavor to acquire it, and to

aid its increase in our souls by fidelity in the practice of this virtue.

POINT III

ADVANTAGES OF RELIGIOUS POVERTY

CONSIDERATION.—1st. It removes the greatest obstacle to eternal salvation, attachment to the possessions of earth. “A rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven,” (St. Matt. 19: 23,) says Jesus Christ. 2d. It is a pledge of eternal possessions and a superabundance of joy. “Thou shalt have treasure in heaven,” (St. Matt. 19: 21,) says our Lord again. 3d. It places us in the path of perfection, according to the words of our Lord, “If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast and give to the poor, and come follow Me.” (St. Matt. 19: 21.) The entire detachment from earthly possessions is a powerful help in uniting us to God by charity, in which consists all perfection. “Plenitudo legis charitas.” “The fullness of the law is love.” And as regards this present life only, what blessings does religious poverty bring upon us! We feel them better than we can express them. We shall feel them better still at the hour of death.

APPLICATION.—We should have these thoughts always in our mind, and the difficulties that we meet in our vocation and in keeping our vows will appear slight indeed to us.

COLLOQUY with Jesus Christ, the great model of voluntary poverty.

SERMON ON THE MOUNT:

SECOND, THIRD, FOURTH, AND SEVENTH BEATITUDES

1st Prel. Imagine you hear Jesus saying, "Blessed are the meek," "Blessed are they that mourn," "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice," "Blessed are the peace-makers." (St. Matt. 5: 4-6, 9.)

2d Prel. Beg the grace of being among the number of these blessed ones.

POINT I

THE SECOND AND THE SEVENTH BEATITUDES

CONSIDERATION.—"Blessed are the meek"—not only those who are so naturally, but also and especially those who, though naturally fiery and passionate, have obtained a mastery over impatience, anger, the desire of revenge, and all other feelings incompatible with peace of heart—"for they shall possess the land." According to St. Austin, because they shall hold earthly possessions in peace, being loved and esteemed by all. According to St. Bernard, because they shall possess the land of their own hearts, be masters of their own actions, (for the angry man is not his own master.) According to St. Jerome, and the majority of doctors, because they shall possess by right of heritage the land of the living—heaven, according to the words of David, "I believe to see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living." (Psalm 26: 13.)

APPLICATION.—Great blessings, then, even in this life, are promised to meekness. It is worth the trouble it will give us to acquire it in perfection; this consists in being able to control the first burst of impatience, to live peacefully with bad-tempered people, to preserve liberty of spirit and an unbroken peace in the midst of the vicissitudes of life. There is a superior degree of this perfection on which our Lord has bestowed a sepa-

rate blessing, (the seventh,) that of being able to preserve or restore peace and union among men, among our brethren. "Blessed are the peacemakers," continued our Lord; for they shall so resemble God their Father that they shall be worthy in an especial manner to be called "*fili Dei*," "the children of God." (St. Matt. 5:9.) How do I stand as regards the perfection of meekness, of peace with myself, with others?

AFFECTIONS.—An ardent desire to imitate our Lord, who was meek and humble of heart.

RESOLUTIONS.—Frequently to make a particular examination on meekness and the peace of the soul.

POINT II

THIRD BEATITUDE

CONSIDERATION.—"Blessed are ye that weep;" namely, those who are full of compunction, who delight in weeping and mourning before God over the miseries of their exile, the wounds of their soul, and especially at the thought of the many injuries done to God, of the numerous souls who are falling every instant into hell, and of the number of unhappy beings who are rushing blindly thither. They are blessed, says Jesus, because they "shall be comforted," in this life, by the unction of grace, and by the unspeakable sweetness which is found in the tears of compunction. "I have found greater happiness," said St. Austin, "in weeping at the foot of my crucifix than I found in frequenting theatres." Because they shall be comforted without end or measure in heaven.

APPLICATION.—Before your entrance into religion, perhaps you hardly knew even the name of compunction; perhaps you were even among the number of those to whom our Lord addressed those terrible words, "Wo to you that now laugh; for you shall mourn and weep." (St. Luke 6:25.) How every

thing around you invites you to compunction, and reminds you of the motives for it! Why is it, then, that you feel it so rarely, and that the effects of it are so little visible in your conduct? Is it not because you are too dissipated, too unmortified?

AFFECTIONS.— Beg of God to grant you *compunction of heart*, and also *the gift of tears*, should grace inspire you to desire it.

RESOLUTIONS.— To love recollection, retirement, and silence, that you may ever be closely united to God.

POINT III

FOURTH BEATITUDE

CONSIDERATION.—“Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice.” Jesus Christ, then, declares that fervent religious are blessed who are trying to become better, more pure, more humble, more mortified, more united to God, never thinking they have sufficiently obeyed the precept, “Be you therefore perfect, as also your Heavenly Father is perfect.” But does He not at the same time condemn the conduct of the lukewarm religious, who thinks he has done enough by keeping out of grievous faults, and by remaining at the point which he has attained?

APPLICATION.— Are you among the former of these classes? If so, rejoice greatly, for you shall share their happiness. Like them, you will taste, even in this life, the peace and joy of divine consolations; and after this life, you will be satisfied with the abundance of heavenly delights. Fear, then, above all things, to degenerate from your first fervor, and to fall by little and little into lukewarmness.

COLLOQUY with St. Elizabeth, Queen of Portugal, whose Feast is celebrated this day. She was remarkable for her meekness, fervor, and contempt of worldly pleasures.

SERMON ON THE MOUNT:

FIFTH, SIXTH, AND EIGHTH BEATITUDES

1st Prel. Imagine you hear Jesus Christ saying, "Blessed are the merciful, blessed are the clean of heart, blessed are they who suffer persecution." (St. Matt. 5: 7, 8, 10.)

2d Prel. Beg the grace of being among the number of these privileged souls.

POINT I

FIFTH BEATITUDE

CONSIDERATION.—"Blessed are the merciful," who, compassionating the sufferings of others, try to help them; not simply from human and natural motives, but from a principle of faith. Works of mercy are enjoined on us by our Lord's precept when He said, "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful," (St. Luke 6: 36;) and He has deigned to represent the needy in His own person. At the day of judgment, He will say, "Come, ye blessed of My Father; I was hungry, and you gave Me to eat. Amen I say to you, As long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me." (St. Matt. 25: 34, 35, 40.)

APPLICATION.—If you belong to an order especially devoted to corporal works of mercy, rejoice in it, and fulfill your duties fervently, with a pure intention before God. If you belong to an educational order, you have no less cause of joy; you can accomplish greater works still—the spiritual works of mercy. To convert sinners and bring them back to God, to instruct the ignorant, to root out sinful prejudices, to inculcate the truths and maxims of the faith which men are so determined to misrepresent, etc.: how have you performed these duties? with patience? with generosity? Do you obtain help in them from God? our Lady? the angels

and saints? by the sanctity of your life, your prayers, and your mortifications?

AFFECTIONS.— Beg the grace that we may become, in the hands of God, instruments for the accomplishment of His merciful designs for mankind.

RESOLUTIONS.— When tempted to discouragement, let us reflect on these words of Christ, “Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy.”

POINT II

SIXTH BEATITUDE

CONSIDERATION.—“Blessed are the clean of heart; for they shall see God.” There are many degrees of purity of heart: the first is freedom from mortal sin; the second, freedom from deliberate venial sin and all affection for sin; the third, freedom from the least ill-regulated affection; the fourth, freedom from those imperceptible stains which hinder our entrance into heaven; the fifth consists of that perfect purity of intention by which a man sees, feels, and loves nothing but God. Great is the reward promised to this last degree — they shall see God; in this world by the great light given to them; and in the other, by the beatific vision, which will be in proportion to these different degrees.

APPLICATION.— To which of these degrees are you trying to attain? With what fervor and perseverance are you using the means for attaining it? Are you making a good use of confession? the particular examen, silence, solitude, recollection, vigilance over your heart and your senses? Every effort will be richly rewarded; to each degree of purity will be given a further degree of eternal happiness.

AFFECTIONS.—“Cor mundum crea in me, Deus, et spiritum rectum innova in visceribus meis.” “Create

a clean heart in me, O God! and renew a right spirit within me."

RESOLUTIONS.—To endeavor by every means to attain great purity of heart.

POINT III

EIGHTH BEATITUDE

CONSIDERATION.—"Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake." This applies to those who faithfully observe the law of God, and, if they are religious, all the rules and observances of their institute; who are faithful and intrepid in using every means their zeal can suggest to them for defending the cause of God, for procuring His glory, saving souls, and preserving the rights of the Church. Their reward will be in proportion to their labors and dangers; "theirs is the kingdom of heaven," says our Lord. Do not complain of those who wish you ill, and malign you because you are religious; rather pity and pray for them. They do you a service by wishing you evil. If you say that you care little for outward persecution, that you do not suffer personally from it, but that it is very painful to you to meet with coldness and a kind of opposition on the part of your brethren toward you, ask yourself if this be not caused by your want of regularity, your haughtiness or eccentricity of character, your obstinacy of disposition, or hastiness of temper? If this be the case, you are not suffering for justice' sake, but for the faults that you can and ought to correct. Do this, and all your cause for complaint will vanish. You will be beloved of God and men.

COLLOQUY with our Divine Master, who, with invincible patience, endured such violent persecution even from those on whom He had conferred benefits.

SERMON ON THE MOUNT:

QUALITIES OF AN APOSTOLIC MAN

1st Prel. Imagine you see Jesus Christ on the mountain surrounded by His Apostles.

2d Prel. Beg for the qualities which distinguish apostolic men.

POINT I

THE SALT OF THE EARTH

CONSIDERATION.— All religious bodies, with a few exceptions, are devoted to works of charity and zeal; consequently one can say, that all religious, though they may not be priests, ought to be apostles. To them also Jesus Christ was speaking when He said to His Apostles in figurative language that they should become the salt of the earth, or they would be good for nothing. Let us listen to His very words: “*Vos estis sal terræ; quod si sal evanuerit, in quo salietur?*” “You are all the salt of the earth; but if the salt lose its savor, wherewith shall it be salted?” (St. Matt. 5: 13.)

APPLICATION.— If you desire to learn whether you are this “salt of the earth,” in the sense in which our Lord spoke, you should consider the proper qualities of salt; it preserves food from corruption, and makes what was insipid pleasant to the taste. This is what you should do for the souls committed to your care, whether they be children in schools or youth in colleges, or the sick whom you have to nurse in their homes or in the hospitals. You should by your diligence and zeal labor to preserve them from the corruption of sin, and induce them to render themselves pleasing to God by the practice of virtue. It is true that this is the work of grace; but grace seldom acts without our

cooperation. What have you done, what are you habitually doing, to merit the assistance of grace?

AFFECTIONS.— Ask the grace which the Apostle desired for the Colossians, “ Let your speech be always in grace, seasoned with salt.” (Col. 4: 6.)

RESOLUTIONS.— Accustom yourself to rely always on the grace of God rather than on your own efforts.

POINT II

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

CONSIDERATION.— Our Lord, after telling His Apostles that they were to be the salt of the earth, went on to say they were to be the light of the world; by which He meant that they were to drive out the darkness of idolatry from the whole world; they were to cause the one true God to be known, adored, and faithfully served unto the ends of the earth; they were to convert and sanctify the human race. We know how faithfully they fulfilled their sublime mission. St. Paul, speaking to the Christians at Miletus, gives us an idea of their zeal when he says, “ You know from the first day that I came into Asia, in what manner I have been with you, . . . and taught you, publicly and from house to house. . . . I ceased not with tears to admonish every one of you night and day.” (Acts 20: 18, 20, 31.)

APPLICATION.— Here is a picture of a zealous religious: in all places, at all times, and in all circumstances, he is seeking and finding occasions of saying a word which will enlighten the mind and kindle the fire of divine love in the heart; in all places and at all times he is preaching, without appearing so to do. The light and the unction which he has received in prayer naturally flow from his heart and from his lips. People always leave him feeling that they have been enlightened and drawn nearer to God. Do you recognize

yourself in this portrait? Are your brethren and others edified by intercourse with you, and especially by your conversation?

AFFECTIONS.—Humble yourself, finding that your heart and mind are yet so far from being filled with the things of God.

RESOLUTIONS.—Reflect frequently on the best method of rendering your conversation useful to your neighbor.

POINT III

THE LIVING IMAGE OF CHRISTIAN PERFECTION

CONSIDERATION.—"A city seated on a mountain can not be hid. So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." (St. Matt. 5: 14, 16.) We learn from these words what is the third quality by which we should be distinguished. We should constantly give edification before men; we should draw them toward God by the silent language of our conduct, a language which is more persuasive than the most eloquent words.

APPLICATION.—Is your conduct such as this in the house and out of it? Can your superior say of you to your brethren, Copy him? Can you say to those whom you have to do with, what the Apostle said to the Corinthians, "Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ"? (1. Cor. 11: 1.) Happy indeed would it be for us if we all verified the powerful declaration of St. Cyprian in answer to pagan objections, "*Nos non pulchra loquimur, sed pulchra vivimus.*" "We think far less about speaking well than acting well."

COLLOQUY with St. Felicitas, that heroic mother, who suffered martyrdom on this day, having first witnessed the death of her seven sons, and encouraged them to endure their torments.

FEAST OF ST. NORBERT'S TRIUMPH *

FOUNDER OF THE ORDER OF THE
PREMONSTRATIENSISANS †*1st Prel.* Imagine you see the saint in glory.*2d Prel.* Beg of him to take us under his powerful protection.

POINT I

CONVERSION OF ST. NORBERT

CONSIDERATION.—Norbert was born at Sautern, in the duchy of Cleves, of parents allied to the royal family. After having passed through college with extraordinary success, he was ordained sub-deacon, obtained a rich canonry, and soon after was named chaplain to the emperor, Henry IV.; but his conduct was very unworthy of his holy calling. Until he was thirty, he passed his life at court in dissipation and amusement. God in His mercy struck him a severe blow, to draw him out of his evil ways. One day, as he was riding to Freten in Westphalia, for some worldly entertainment, a clap of thunder threw him on the ground half-dead. When he came to himself, he cried out, like another Saul, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" An interior voice replied, "Fly from evil, and do good; seek peace in retreat and penance." Immediately Norbert was changed into another man, left the court, gave all his goods to the poor, cast aside his rich clothing, put on a poor cassock, and went to the monastery of St. Sigebert near Cologne, and there did exemplary penance.

* The Saints who have founded religious orders should naturally have a particular interest for us.

† Born, 1080; died, June 6th, 1134; canonized, 1582. The order, according to Père Helyot, possessed, at the close of the eighteenth century, 50 provinces, 130 houses of men, and 400 of women.

APPLICATION.— After the example of St. Norbert, let us be docile to grace, whether it speaks to us by gentle inspirations or by extraordinary lights. If we have imitated him in his faults, let us imitate him also in his penance, and persevere in it, like him, until death. Have you not given up the practice of penance, at least in some degree?

AFFECTIONS.— Humble prayer, hope, offering of your good resolutions.

RESOLUTIONS.— Never to yield to the temptation of discouragement.

POINT II

EVANGELICAL LIFE OF ST. NORBERT

CONSIDERATION.— After passing two years in retirement, Norbert was inflamed with zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Scarcely was he ordained priest when he began to preach penance, and wrought numberless conversions. The Bishop of Laon, struck by his sanctity, was determined to keep him in his diocese. Norbert chose for his dwelling-place a deserted valley called Prémontré. It was decreed by God that it should be the cradle of the future order which was to bring forth so many saints, and immortalize the name of Norbert. He was soon surrounded by forty disciples, the first thirteen of whom came from Brabant. He gave them rules full of wisdom, founded on the rule of St. Austin. His institute was approved in a solemn bull by Pope Honorius II. (Feb. 1125.) The following year, Norbert was forced to accept the archbishopric of Magdeburg. He held this see eight years without diminishing either his austerities or his care for the order he had founded.

APPLICATION.— If it has not been given to you, like St. Norbert, to found an order or become a great missionary, try at least to sanctify yourself in the order

to which God has called you, and to help on the sanctification of your brethren by your good example. Both of these are obligations: do you seriously reflect on them?

AFFECTIONS.—I will humble myself before God, considering the little good that I accomplish, and I will entreat Him to accept the offering of my good-will.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will endeavor to edify my brethren. I will pray for missionaries, and will unite my intention with them in all my labors and sufferings.

POINT III

TRIUMPH OF ST. NORBERT

CONSIDERATION.—Among the many miracles which the saint wrought, there is one which has made him illustrious; and this was the victory he won over heresy and the sectaries of Tanchelin. This fanatic had revived the horrors and excesses of the ancient Gnostics over a vast extent of country of which Antwerp was the center. At the entreaty of the bishops and princes, Norbert went to Antwerp and acted in such a manner that before his departure Catholic worship was re-established, and the use of the Sacraments vigorously resumed. The grateful clergy gave the saint the church of St. Michael, which became one of the most celebrated abbeys of the order, and the Holy See allowed the children of St. Norbert to celebrate every year, on the 11th of July, a feast called "Feast of St. Norbert's Triumph." Pope Gregory XVI., wishing to revive the memory of this great event, extended the permission to celebrate this feast to all the clergy of the Catholic diocese of Malines, in which Antwerp is comprised.

COLLOQUY with St. Norbert.

SERMON ON THE MOUNT:

EXACT OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW

1st Prel. Behold Jesus seated on the mountain.

2d Prel. Beg for a great esteem and ardent love of religious discipline.

POINT I.

FIDELITY TO EVERY POINT OF DISCIPLINE

CONSIDERATION.—“Do not think that I am come to destroy the law. . . . I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall not pass of the law till all be fulfilled.” (St. Matt. 5: 17, 18.) These words teach us that an exact observance of the rule and religious discipline is pleasing to our Lord. In fact, what distinguishes us from seculars is, that we give up for the love of God our liberty even in the smallest details of our life; we bear the yoke of the rule, and of community-life; and hence it is that the Church gives us the name of *regulars*. We falsify, then, both our name and the engagements we have contracted before God and before the Church, if we make little account of certain points of religious discipline or of rule.

APPLICATION.—Examine yourself upon your disposition in respect to the observances of community-life. To form a correct judgment, it is well to go into details. Are you exact in rising promptly and with devotedness? in going to the different exercises at the first sound of the bell—to the visit, to the Blessed Sacrament, meditation, prayers said in common? Are you faithful in observing silence, modesty, and religious gravity?

AFFECTIONS.—Ask pardon for your past faults, particularly those which may have been habitual.

RESOLUTIONS.— To pay particular attention, during this day, to the practice of punctuality in all things.

POINT II

DANGERS OF THE LEAST INFRACTION OF RELIGIOUS DISCIPLINE

CONSIDERATION.— Meditate earnestly on these words of our Lord, which follow those just quoted: "He therefore that shall break one of these least commandments, and shall so teach men, shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; . . . for I tell you that unless your justice abound more than that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." (St. Matt. 5: 19, 20.) Then consider what the author of the *Imitation* says, "A religious man that lives not in discipline" (that is, who excuses himself from what is irksome to him) "lies open to dreadful ruin. He who does not shun small defects, by little and little falls into greater." (I. Book, xxv.) Then you will understand the presumption and peril of an *habitual* neglect of certain points of rule — peril for yourself, and peril for others from your bad example.

APPLICATION.— If you feel yourself guilty, try to discover the source of the evil, that you may remedy it. Generally it is dissipation which destroys the interior life: then our spiritual duties are performed negligently; there is a void in the heart, which we try to fill by seeking for intercourse with seculars, under some idle excuse of zeal or propriety; then it naturally follows that we excuse the great evils that prevail in the world, to excuse our own infidelity to the rule, looking on them as trifles.

AFFECTIONS.— Pray that you may be preserved from such obvious and lamentable delusions. Animate yourself to do better henceforth, to edify the com-

munity by your exact observance of religious discipline, all for the greater glory of God.

RESOLUTIONS.— To reject all that may tend to favor laxity of religious discipline, remembering the words of the Holy Ghost, "He that contemneth small things shall fall by little and little." (Ecclus. 19: 1.)

POINT III

ADVANTAGES OF A STRICT OBSERVANCE OF DISCIPLINE

CONSIDERATION.— Meditate further on the following words of our Divine Master, "He that shall do and teach shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven," (St. Matt. 5: 19;) *great*, because he will have shown great generosity in the service of God; great, because by his example, still more than by his words, he will have done much to secure the perseverance and spiritual progress of his neighbor, especially his brethren in religion.

APPLICATION.— This thought is a most encouraging one, and we shall be always faithful to the smallest observances if we can but always keep them in mind. Let us beg of God that it may be thus, and that the words of the author of the *Imitation* may be applicable to our community, "Oh! how sweet and comfortable it is to see brethren fervent and devout, regular and well-disciplined!" (I. Book, xxv.)

COLLOQUY with St. Joseph, who sanctified himself by fidelity in small things, and by union with God during the labors of the day.

ON FERVOR IN SERVING GOD

1st Prel. Imagine you hear St. Paul saying, "In spirit fervent, serving the Lord." (Romans 12: 11.)

ad Exec. Beg for grace to set a just value on fervor.

POINT I

NATURE OF FERVOR

CONSIDERATION.— That exactitude in observing all the points of religious discipline which we have meditated on supposes fervor of spirit; for in reality fervor is nothing more than promptitude in devoting our whole self with all our heart to the service of God. If this be the habitual disposition of the soul, it is worth to be called a virtue, (for all virtue is habitual;) though strictly speaking, fervor is only a *quality* of the virtue of religion, according to St. Thomas; according to others, of the virtue of charity. Therefore it is plain that a fervent religious will be faithful to the smallest observances of his rule, in which he sees the expression of the will of God.

APPLICATION.— Weigh well these words of the *Imitation*, "Our fervor and progress ought to be every day greater; but now it is esteemed a great matter if a man can retain some part of his first fervor." (I. Book xi.) It is very humiliating for us to find an author so versed in the knowledge of men making such an assertion. At first we are tempted to dispute it; but do we not find it fulfilled in ourselves? Compare the first year of your religious profession with the last: in which of the two were you most exact and fervent? What remains of your first burst of fervor? If it had been kept up, to what a high degree of virtue you would have already attained!

AFFECTIONS.— Humble yourself before God. Excite yourself to fervor, and animate your courage.

RESOLUTIONS.— Each morning, on rising, renew your good resolutions, and strive to animate your piety.

POINT II

HAPPINESS OF A FERVENT RELIGIOUS

CONSIDERATION.— There is nothing more true than that the fervent religious is happy. With fervor, we have every thing; without it, nothing. With fervor, there is purity and peace of conscience, there is perfect happiness; labor is no longer a burden, and the yoke of religious life becomes light and sweet, the greatest sacrifices become delightful, and we heap up merits in a brief space of time. We become a consolation to our superiors and edification to our brethren; we draw down benedictions from heaven on our community, and on our good works and undertakings. Lastly, with fervor we make constant progress in virtue, obtain final perseverance, and a weight of glory in heaven.

APPLICATION.— If you have not always been very fervent, you have at least been so at times; and did you not then understand the reality of all these blessings of fervor? Were you not happy then? Did you not feel the truth of the Psalmist's words, that "it is sweet to serve the Lord"? Rekindle, then, your fervor, if it has grown cold; see by what means you once obtained it, and be assured that you can preserve it by the same means.

AFFECTIONS.— Acts of faith with regard to what has been said on the advantages of fervor, with an ardent desire to possess them.

RESOLUTIONS.— Imitate the examples of fervor given you by your brethren.

POINT III

MISERY OF THE LUKEWARM RELIGIOUS

CONSIDERATION.—“If thou begin to grow lukewarm thou wilt begin to be uneasy. A negligent and lukewarm religious man has trouble upon trouble, and on every side suffers anguish, because he has no comfort within, and is hindered from seeking any without.”

(1. Book, xxv.) Thus does the author of the *Imitation* describe a lukewarm religious. He is indeed miserable, for he is the slave of his passions; he is daily staining his soul with sin; he seeks peace and can not find it; he carries the yoke of religion without its consolations; he labors hard, and reaps little for eternity. Finally, he runs the risk of losing his vocation, and with it the friendship of God and final perseverance.

APPLICATION.—Let these thoughts inspire you with a great fear, or rather a lively horror of lukewarmness, and especially because our vicious nature leans toward it. If you have fallen into it, come out of it, with a holy indignation against yourself—even to-day, when God speaks to your heart—and vigorously begin again to practice the means of preserving fervor. Make some very definite resolutions for this end, and place them at the feet of Jesus, and beg of Him in your fervent Colloquy that He will bless them and render them fruitful.

COLLOQUY with the holy Pope and martyr St. Anacletus, whose Feast we celebrate this day, or else with your holy Patron.

SERMON ON THE MOUNT

PERSECUTIONS

1st Prel. Imagine you hear Jesus saying these words, "Love your enemies: do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that persecute you." (St. Matt. 5:44.)

2d Prel. Beg the grace of a generous conformity to the doctrine, the precepts, and the example of Jesus Christ, in respect to persecutions.

POINT I

DOCTRINE OF JESUS CHRIST ON PERSECUTIONS

CONSIDERATION.—Both the doctrine and life of Jesus Christ were a condemnation of the sins and hypocrisy of the Pharisees. It was enough to draw down upon Him their hatred, calumnies, and deadly persecution. We have made an especial profession of being the disciples and apostles of Jesus; is it, then, any wonder that we are an object of hatred to the wicked? The Lord has foretold us what we have to expect from them. "The servant is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you: they will deliver you up in councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues. The brother also shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the son; and you shall be hated by all men for *My name's sake*." (St. John 15:20; St. Matt. 10:17, 21, 22.)

APPLICATION.—We have all heard of the blind fury of irreligious hatred, and we may perhaps have been the victims of it. But, far from being cast down or made sorrowful by such thoughts, our hearts should be set on fire and filled with joy by recalling those other words of our Lord to our minds: "Blessed are ye when they shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you untruly, for My

sake. Be glad and rejoice; for your reward is very great in heaven. For so they persecuted the prophets that were before you." (St. Matt. 5: 11, 12.)

And besides, is not the glory of being thus made like to the Son of God on earth before we join Him in heaven a sufficient cause for holy joy and pride?

AFFECTIONS.—Awaken within you the desire to suffer much in the cause of God and of His Church.

RESOLUTIONS.—Should occasion arise, to endure in the spirit of faith the insults and persecutions of the wicked.

POINT II

PRECEPTS OF JESUS CHRIST IN REGARD TO PERSECUTIONS

CONSIDERATION.—Let us now meditate on the precepts that our Lord commands us to follow in respect to those who persecute us, or rather the Church of Jesus Christ in our persons. "Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you, that you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven, who maketh His sun to rise upon the just and unjust." (St. Matt. 5: 44, 45.) What wonderful gentleness is contained in these words! Are they impossible to be obeyed? No, says St. Jerome; for we see them fulfilled in St. Stephen, the first martyr, and those who followed him. All of them, when dying, prayed for their murderers. We find them obeyed again by the first Christians, of whom the Apostle says boldly, "Maledicimur et benedicimus: blasphemamur et obsecramus." "We are reviled, and we bless; we are blasphemed, and we entreat." (1. Cor. 4: 12, 13.)

APPLICATION.—The Church teaches us in what way we should pray for our enemies, by the words which she has placed in the Litany of the Saints: "That

Thou wouldst vouchsafe to humble the enemies of holy Church: we beseech Thee hear us." We thus ask that by temporal misfortunes they may be rendered powerless to do harm, and that, being humbled, they may feel the hand of God, recognize their errors, be converted, and die a good death.

It is by humiliation only that these wretched persons will be recalled to a sense of duty. If we could obtain such a result by our prayers, we should have rendered to them the greatest possible service.

AFFECTIONS.—Let us implore the mercy of God on behalf of those who hate us as the disciples of Christ and the defenders of His Church.

RESOLUTIONS.—While manifesting the iniquity of their designs, let us speak of them only with feelings of sincere compassion.

POINT III

CONDUCT OF JESUS CHRIST IN PERSECUTIONS

CONSIDERATION.—The Lord was not contented, says St. Austin, with giving us His precepts, and promising great rewards to those who kept them; He chose to give us also His example. When He was dying, He prayed for His enemies, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." (St. Luke 23: 34.)

APPLICATION.—If we meditate on the charity and the heroic gentleness of a God who had been calumniated, hated, put to death by His creatures, those whom He had loaded with blessings, all the difficulties and the seeming impossibilities of pardoning offenses, of returning good for evil, will disappear.

COLLOQUY with Jesus dying on the Cross and praying for His enemies.

SERMON ON THE MOUNT

WE SHOULD FLY VAINGLORY

1st Prel. Imagine you hear Jesus Christ saying, "Take heed you do not your justice before men, to be seen by them."

2d Prel. Beg for grace to understand the difference of acting to please men and God — *God only.*

POINT I

ACTING TO PLEASE MEN

CONSIDERATION.— The Lord, having warned us against the violence of persecutions, now puts us on our guard against the dangers and snares of vainglory. "Take heed that you do not your justice before men, to be seen by them: otherwise you shall not have a reward of your Father who is in heaven." (St. Matt. 6: 1.) Then it is plain from the words of Him who is the infallible Truth, that it is in the intention that the merit of our actions consists. If we perform them to please God, they are meritorious; if they are done from vainglory, they have no merit, and make us liable to punishment.

APPLICATION.— Pride, or an inordinate desire for vainglory, is, as it were, identified with us since original sin. From this springs that continual and secret self-seeking of the esteem of men in every thing we do in public; and this is simply vainglory. It is a subtle temptation, and may be compared to a worm gnawing through fruit. The greatest saints, notwithstanding the constant vigilance which they observed over their souls, were fearful of being surprised into it, remembering our Lord's warning, "Take heed; be on your guard." What fear, then, ought you to have of losing the merit of your good works, you who watch so little over yourself, your thoughts, and your actions?

Take this matter into serious consideration: it is worth the trouble.

AFFECTIONS.—Ask, like the blind man of Jericho, to be enlightened, “Domine, ut videam.” “Lord, that I may see.” (St. Luke 18:41.) How do I stand with regard to the illusions of vainglory, and what should I do to avoid them?

RESOLUTIONS.—To dread these illusions. Frequently to renew your good intention.

POINT II

ACTING SO AS TO PLEASE GOD

CONSIDERATION.—“If thy eye be single, thy whole body shall be lightsome.” (St. Matt. 6:22.) These words are easily understood: the eye of our body, in a moral sense, is, according to St. Jerome, the understanding which never acts without an intention. If this eye be single and sinless, it will always enable us to see God, our last end; and our acts will tend simply and directly to Him; we shall do them with the *intention* of pleasing Him, as the only Author of all goodness and beauty. “To the only God be honor and glory.”

APPLICATION.—Great, indeed, is the Christian and the religious who has God in view in all his actions. He is constantly raising himself to the heights of heaven; he identifies himself, so to speak, with the Divinity, having but one will with it, and happy is he; for God, who sees the secrets of all hearts, will reward even the smallest action, however indifferent in its nature. It is our Lord Himself who says, “Et Pater tuus, qui videt in abscondito, reddet tibi.” “Thy Father, who seeth in secret, will repay thee.” (St. Matt. 6:4.) Are we trying to attain this happiness? We can not gain it without great purity of conscience, and a continual vigilance over self. How do we stand?

AFFECTIONS.— Say fervently with a certain pious ascetic, “*Moriar mihi, ut vivam tibi, Deus meus at omnia!*” “May I die to myself, in order to live only for Thee, my God, and my all.”

RESOLUTIONS.— To repeat frequently this pious aspiration.

POINT III

ACTING SO AS TO PLEASE GOD ONLY

CONSIDERATION.— If it be a great and happy thing to act habitually for God, how much more great and happy it is to be doing what is seen only by God, and to reach such a point as to lose sight entirely of self, and to be safe from any temptation to vainglory; and, without regard to the promised reward, to be entirely occupied with the thought of God’s glory! This is the ideal of absolute perfection; we ought to aspire to it, although we can not fully attain it.

APPLICATION.— Do not be cast down because of this state of lowliness. It will all end in heaven; and while waiting for that, let us do our best often to renew our pure intentions; and if, while fulfilling our duties we are praised, and the devil of pride tempts us to vainglories, let us say with St. Bernard, “*Non propter te cœpi, nec propter te desinam.*” “I did not begin for thee, and I will not stop for thee.”

COLLOQUY with St. Henry, Emperor, whose Festival we celebrate this day. Great amongst men, he was yet greater in the sight of God, through his simplicity, and the purity of intention which characterized him even amid the splendors of earthly glory.

FEAST OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL,

AND OF THE CONFRATERNITY OF THE SCAPULAR

1st Prel. I will imagine that the scapular is presented to me by the Blessed Virgin.

2d Prel. I will implore her aid, that I may wear it with advantage to myself.

POINT I

ORIGIN OF THE TITLE OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL, AND OF THE CONFRATERNITY OF THE SCAPULAR

CONSIDERATION.—Mount Carmel is celebrated as the dwelling-place of the prophet Elias, and of the sons of the prophets, who were his disciples. Tradition relates that their race was perpetuated there, and that those of them who lived at the time of the promulgation of the Gospel submitted without delay to its law. The Roman Breviary, in the office of this day, says that they were the first who carried veneration for the Blessed Virgin to the extent of erecting a chapel in her honor, where they joined in singing her praises. We may therefore trace the origin of the title of our Lady of Mount Carmel as well as that of the celebrated order of Carmelites, to this remote period of antiquity. Many of these holy religious settled in England, about the middle of the thirteenth century; and in that country, at the Convent of Cambridge, the memorable event took place which gave rise to the devotion of the holy scapular. On the 16th July, 1251, while the blessed Simon Stock, general of the order of Carmelites, which at that time was subject to violent persecution, implored, with extraordinary fervor, the protection of the most Holy Virgin, that Blessed Mother appeared to him, holding in her hand the scapular, and addressed to him these gracious words, "Receive, my dear son, this scapular

of your order, in token of the privilege which I have obtained for you and for the children of Carmel; he who at his death shall be found clothed in this habit shall be preserved from eternal flames: it is a sign of salvation, a safeguard in time of danger, and a pledge of special protection." The learned and illustrious Pontiff, Benedict XIV., in his Treatise on the Feasts of the Blessed Virgin, (II. Book, c. vi.,) declares that he fully believes in the vision of the blessed Simon, as well as in the revelation by which, half a century later, the Holy Virgin promised Pope John XXII. "that she would rescue from Purgatory as speedily as possible, and especially on the first Saturday after their decease, the members of the Confraternity of the Scapular."

APPLICATION.—This consideration alone should be sufficient to inspire you with deep reverence for the devotion of the holy scapular, and to induce you to desire to wear it. Therefore, if you have not yet been received into the Confraternity; or if you have neglected to wear the scapular, or have worn it without devotion or spiritual profit, you should take the opportunity afforded by the return of this Festival to repair your past negligence.

AFFECTIONS.—Make an act of thanksgiving to the Blessed Virgin, and ask her pardon for having been hitherto deficient in gratitude and fervor.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will endeavor to comply with the prescribed conditions, thus to secure the special graces and the numerous indulgences attached to the devotion of the holy scapular.

POINT II

ADVANTAGES TO BE DERIVED FROM THE SCAPULAR

CONSIDERATION.—According to the revelations on which we have just reflected, the scapular is, for those

who wear it devoutly, having been duly received into the Confraternity — 1st, a safeguard and a pledge of special protection in dangers of soul and body. This has been proved by many miracles. 2d. A sign of salvation. He who, at the hour of death, is clothed in this habit, said the vision, shall be preserved from eternal flames; that is to say, Mary will obtain for him, if a just man, final perseverance; if a sinner, conversion, and justification through the sacrament of penance, or through perfect contrition. 3d. A well-grounded hope of speedy release from Purgatory. 4th. An established right to a participation in all the good works, penances, etc., of the members and religious of the order of Carmel, as well as a share in the extraordinary indulgences granted to the same order.

APPLICATION.—You desire doubtless to secure all these advantages. You may do so without difficulty; the conditions prescribed are easy of fulfillment. It is only necessary that you be enrolled a member of the Confraternity by a Carmelite father, or a duly authorized priest, and that you wear the scapular as directed, especially at the hour of death. Should you have lost, or neglected, even for a considerable time, to wear the scapular, you have but to resume it. It is not even necessary that the new one should be blessed. To claim the privilege of being speedily released from Purgatory, according to the “Bulla Sabbatina,” “the first Saturday,” it is, however, requisite that you should practice the virtue of chastity according to your state, and recite every day the little Office of the Blessed Virgin, if not bound to the Divine Office. Those who can not read must abstain on Wednesdays and Saturdays, unless the rule be dispensed with, or commuted for other works of piety by a duly qualified superior. Examine if you have been faithful in complying with these conditions, and resolve to remedy henceforth all that has been defective.

COLLOQUY with the most Holy Virgin.

SERMON ON THE MOUNT:

THE LORD'S PRAYER, OR PATER-NOSTER

1st Prel. Imagine you see Jesus surrounded by His Apostles and a great multitude of people.

2d Prel. Ask to understand the Lord's Prayer rightly.

POINT I

INTRODUCTION OF THE PRAYER

CONSIDERATION.— Jesus, after having condemned the hypocrisy of the Pharisees for pretending to make long prayers in public, deigned to give us that wonderful prayer, called the Lord's Prayer, or the *Pater-noster*. "When you are praying, speak not much as the heathens; thus therefore shall you pray: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our supersubstantial bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation. But deliver us from evil. Amen." (St. Matt. 6: 7, 9—13.)

APPLICATION.— We are all convinced that the *Pater-noster* is the most excellent of all prayers; most pleasing to God and profitable to ourselves. Yet do we always recite it with the reverence and devotion this conviction should produce? That we may do so, let us meditate on each word. "Our Father, who art in heaven." Our Lord teaches us in this that we should recollect ourselves before we pray, and think to whom we are going to speak, and raise our thoughts to God in heaven. Then in teaching us to call God our *Father*, He shows that we should pray with filial confidence; and to cement a close union between us all, and

remind us to pray for one another, we are to say *our* Father, and not *my* Father.

AFFECTIONS.—Acts of thanksgiving. Ask pardon of our Divine Lord for having so often repeated carelessly that prayer which was first uttered by Him.

RESOLUTIONS.—To recollect ourselves before prayer, as our Lord teaches us to do when reciting the *Pater-noster*.

POINT II

FIRST PETITION OF THE PATER-NOSTER

CONSIDERATION.—“Hallowed be Thy name.” By the name of God we mean all His attributes, and we ask that they may be known, served, and glorified by all men. (*Cat. de Mal.* sec. 27.) The first petition of the *Pater-noster* reminds us of the end of our creation, and our first duty—that of sanctifying or glorifying God in ourselves, and as much as we can in others. But as we are incapable of it by our own strength, we earnestly ask for grace for ourselves and for all men: saying these words, “Hallowed be Thy name.” And thus, by seeking before all other things the glory of our Heavenly Father, we are bringing about our own salvation.

APPLICATION.—What sort of efforts do we make, and with what success, that our Heavenly Father may be sanctified and glorified, first in ourselves, by purity of conscience, according to St. Paul’s words, “*Domini- num sanctificate in cordibus vestris, . . . conscientiam habentes bonam.*” “Sanctify the Lord in your hearts, . . . having a good conscience,” (1. St. Peter 3: 15, 16;) then by our brethren, by our regularity, our modesty, our conversations, our zeal, in such a way as to force them, in a manner, to glorify God, the only Author of all that is good and edifying in us, “*Ut videant opera vestra bona, et glorificent Patrem vestrum, qui*

in coelis est." "That they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven"? (St. Matt. 5: 16.)

AFFECTIONS.—"Sit nomen Domini benedictum, usque in sæculum." "Blessed be the name of the Lord, from henceforth now and forever." (Psalm 112: 2.) "Confiteantur tibi, Deus, populi omnes." (Psalm 148.)

RESOLUTIONS.—Fervently make one of these aspirations on hearing blasphemous or irreligious expressions.

POINT III

SECOND PETITION

CONSIDERATION.—"Thy kingdom come." We are not asking by these words that God may reign over creation, for that He has done from the beginning; but we ask that He may reign over the hearts of men, so that they may all submit of their own free-will to His holy laws. We beg also that our Heavenly Father will hasten the day when, all reunited together round His throne, we shall reign eternally with Him in heaven.

APPLICATION.—We ought to unite action with prayer, and try before all things to live as worthy children of our Heavenly Father, that He may reign over our minds and hearts; that all our thoughts, words, and actions may be ruled according to His holy will; and we should endeavor to let God reign over others by all the direct or indirect means in our power. And we have so many! Let us see in what way we can improve upon the past.

COLLOQUY with our Father who is in heaven.

SERMON ON THE MOUNT

THE LORD'S PRAYER CONTINUED

1st Prel. Imagine our Lord teaching us how to pray.

2d Prel. Beg for grace to pray well.

POINT I

THIRD PETITION OF THE PATER-NOSTER

CONSIDERATION.—“Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.” Our Lord wishes us to ask for what is more perfect and more glorious to His Heavenly Father than the simple fulfillment of His will or of His commandments, that is, that His most holy will may be done in us as perfectly as it is by the angels and saints in heaven; that at least we should feel an ardent desire of approaching this perfection; and that we should incessantly beg for the grace of which we stand in need.

APPLICATION.—By our religious profession we are bound, more than the generality of the faithful, to tend toward this perfection, and it is much easier for us than they to approach nearer to it; for, first, the good pleasure of God as to all the details of life is clearly manifested to us by our rule, and in case of doubt by our superiors, the interpreters of the will of God; secondly, the assurance that we are doing what is most agreeable to God, the good example of our brethren, and the grace of our state, make the execution of it easier, sweeter, and doubly meritorious. Happy and glorious is our lot! It ought to convince us that it bears a close resemblance with that of the blessed in Paradise.

AFFECTIONS.—Let us rejoice at the great grace we possess in our religious vocation, and thank God for it.

Let us beg of the Saints to assist us in doing the will of God on earth as they do it in heaven.

RESOLUTIONS.— Prompt, entire, loving, and constant obedience to all that signifies the will of God in our regard, were it only manifested by a wish.

POINT II

FOURTH PETITION

CONSIDERATION.— Our Lord, after having taught us how we ought first to seek the glory of our Heavenly Father, teaches us what we should ask for ourselves: “Give us this day our daily bread.” “Our bread,” all that is necessary to sustain our corporal life, and also the food for our spiritual life; “daily,” to remind us that, whether rich or poor, we stand in continual need of help from our Heavenly Father; “this day,” to teach us that we should renew our prayer daily, lean upon God’s providence, and not disquiet ourselves about the future.

APPLICATION.— Recall to your mind, one by one, all the years of your life, especially those you have passed in religion, and see with what liberality, or rather prodigality, your Father who is in heaven has provided for all your wants. What gratitude have you shown for them? If a superfluity has been given to you, have you not abused it, or only made it the means of satisfying your irregular appetites?

AFFECTIONS.— Praise, blessing, and adoration. Self-humiliation and promise of amendment.

RESOLUTIONS.— During meals reflect on the more than paternal love of God toward you, and take care that the *grace* which you are in the habit of saying may be truly an act of thanksgiving.

POINT III

FIFTH PETITION

CONSIDERATION.—"Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors." We now humbly beg our Father in heaven to forgive us our sins, and the punishment due to them. Our Lord promises that His Father will grant our request, but on condition that on our side we will pardon those who have offended us. "If you will forgive men their offenses," He said, "your Heavenly Father will forgive you also your offenses; but if you will not forgive men, neither will your Father forgive you your offenses." (St. Matt. 6: 14, 15;) and therefore He added these words to the fifth petition, "as we also forgive our debtors."

APPLICATION.—Every day we say the words, "Forgive us our trespasses;" but alas! they bear little fruit, because they are said with very little or no compunction. Neither recollected nor interior, we do not see the faults which we commit daily, and we do not weigh them with the "weights of the sanctuary," as the Saints did, who confessed every day with tears and groans. Let us weep as they did at our Father's feet, and He will remit them and forget them if we will stifle that feeling of anger which arises even involuntarily in our hearts against those who offended us. Do you do this!

COLLOQUY with St. Camillus of Lellis, whose feast is kept this day. He was remarkable for his exceeding charity to the sick, and founded the order of regular Clerks consecrated to their service. (Died, 1614.)

SERMON ON THE MOUNT

THE LORD'S PRAYER

1st Prel. Imagine yourself among those listening to the words of Jesus.

2d Prel. Beg of Him to grant you an obedient and loving spirit.

POINT I

SIXTH PETITION

CONSIDERATION.— And do not allow us to yield to temptation: such is the sense or interpretation of the words, “ And lead us not into temptation: ” it is evident that the word “ lead ” does not mean “ draw ” or “ impel.” God could not draw or impel us into the snares laid to tempt us to sin. The impulse to sin, or temptation, as it is called, comes from the devil, the world, and our corrupt nature. We bear about the germ of it within us; how can we, then, be ever free from temptation? Consequently, when we say, “ Lead us not into temptation,” we are not asking to be exempted from temptation, but begging and entreating our Father to make allowance for our weakness, to turn away from us hurtful temptations, to show us the snares of the devil, to remind us in time of need of the eternal truths; finally, to give us superabundant graces, not only that we may not yield to temptations, but that they may be turned to our spiritual advancement; as it is written, “ *Fidelis autem Deus est, qui non patietur vos tentari, supra id quod potestis, sed faciet etiam cum tentatione proventum, ut possitis sustinere.* ” “ God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able, but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it ” (1. Cor. 10: 13.)

APPLICATION.— This is what we ask of God; but what does He ask from us, so that our prayers may infallibly be granted? He asks that we distrust ourselves; that we fly from the common causes of temptation, the occasions of sin; that we do not delay to pray in temptation, and, if it is an obstinate one, that we make it known to our spiritual father, resolved to follow his advice faithfully, that we may avoid all delusion.

AFFECTIONS.— Ask of God, in fervent prayer, all that is included in the sixth petition, according to the explanation just given.

RESOLUTIONS.— When a temptation, particularly a violent one, has passed away, consider how you have endured it, and endeavor to derive from this examination practical conclusions for your future guidance.

POINT II

SEVENTH PETITION

CONSIDERATION.—“ But deliver us from evil.” By this petition, as by the preceding ones, we ask for many things in a few words; to be preserved from all evil or temporal misfortune, sickness, war, famine, reverses of fortune, persecutions, calumnies, defamation, etc.; we ask to be preserved from falling into mortal sin — an evil infinitely greater than all imaginable temporal misfortunes, an evil in God’s sight, the greatest evil that can befall man; we ask to be preserved or raised out of the habit of mortal sin; but above all things, to be preserved from dying in mortal sin, that evil without hope and without remedy — from eternal damnation.

APPLICATION.— We should ask to be preserved from some of these evils *conditionally* only, so far as is good for our greatest interest — eternal salvation. Some temporal evils, borne with patience and resigna-

tion, purify and sanctify us; they are a supernatural blessing. But how often it happens that we make them an occasion of impatience or discouragement, or murmuring against Providence! In saying, "Deliver us from evil," let us ask that such a misfortune may never happen to us, and that we may not lose any of the hidden treasures of adversity and suffering. What a wonderful prayer the *Pater-noster* is! It is indeed a universal prayer, containing all that is best to ask for the glory of God and our own happiness. Such thoughts as these ought to make us say it with an ever-fresh satisfaction and devotion.

POINT III

CONCLUSION OF THE PATER-NOSTER

CONSIDERATION.—The seven petitions of the *Pater-noster* are followed by the word "Amen"—so be it—a brief but expressive desire, by which we virtually repeat all and each petition.

APPLICATION.—As the word "Amen" contains the whole substance of the Lord's Prayer, let us learn the habit of saying it with attention and *feeling*, adding to it sometimes these words, "Yes, my soul, let it be thus, let it be thus."

COLLOQUY with the great St. Vincent of Paul, Founder of the Congregation of Lazarites, or Fathers of the Mission, and of that of the Sisters of Charity. The world now resounds with his name. Congratulate him on the treasures of merit which he has acquired, through the many spiritual and corporal works of charity performed up to the present time by his fervent disciples, and by the numerous *conferences* established in his name and animated by his spirit. Recommend yourself to his prayers.

SERMON ON THE MOUNT

VARIOUS PRECEPTS OF OUR LORD

1st Prel. Behold Jesus preaching to the crowd, who listen attentively to Him.

2d Prel. Beg for grace to follow His teaching in all things.

POINT I

NOT TO JUDGE OTHERS

CONSIDERATION.—“ Judge not, that you may not be judged; for with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged. . . . And why seest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, and seest not the beam that is in thy own eye?” (St. Matt. 7: 1–3.) Powerful are the words which our Lord uses to induce us to abstain from judging our neighbors. These judgments are almost always presumptuous, and often very sinful; because we can only judge from appearances, which are always deceitful; because we often go so far as to judge and condemn *intentions*, which God alone can penetrate, and alone has the right to judge; finally, because these judgments are dictated almost always by jealousy or wounded self-love, which blinds us to such a degree that, as our Lord says in figurative language, we do not remark in ourselves faults and failings a thousand times worse than those which we see in others.

APPLICATION.— In practice, when we are tempted to despise, to judge, or condemn our brethren, let us think of those divine words on which we have meditated, or of those other words which also fell from our Saviour’s lips, “ As long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me.” (St. Matt. 25: 40.) Let us think that what seems blamable or even sinful to us may be perhaps a meritorious act of

virtue in the eyes of God, who alone can justly understand our actions and intentions; or rather let us say to ourselves, "Why occupy myself with others? It is not for their acts, but for my own, that I shall have to answer to the Judge of all men. If I had always acted in this way, what a loss of time, what troubles, and what sins I should have avoided!"

AFFECTIONS.—Accuse yourself before God, ask His forgiveness.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will pay special attention during this day to my thoughts and feelings with regard to my neighbor.

POINT II

THE NARROW PATH

CONSIDERATION.—"Enter ye in at the narrow gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there are that go in thereat. How narrow is the gate, and strait is the way, that leadeth to life, and few there are that find it." (St. Matt. 7:13, 14.) We naturally ask, "What is the connection between these terrific words of our Lord and the doctrines He was preaching?" but it is soon explained. The Lord knew that we should try in course of time to misinterpret the sense of these doctrines, and to make them give way to the false maxims of the world, the habits and customs of the multitude, and He therefore warned us against these false interpretations.

APPLICATION.—By embracing the yoke of religion we happily have entered the narrow path that leads to life. But alas! even there also we find means of enlarging the way, so that two paths may be seen; one is that of the fervent, who are faithful to the maxims and holy practices of the novitiate; and the other, that of the lukewarm, the degenerate religious, who are

guided more by the maxims of the world than the teaching of Jesus Christ. In which of these two classes are you to be found?

AFFECTIONS.— Let us beg of God to enlighten us, and if necessary, to dispel our illusions, and lead us back to the right path.

RESOLUTIONS.— Distrust yourself. Beware of falling back, or of quitting the narrow path; the more so, as it is so hard to regain it.

POINT III

NOT TO LISTEN TO FALSE PROPHETS

CONSIDERATION.—“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. By their fruits you shall know them.” (St. Matt. 7: 15, 16.) This second warning of our Lord has the same purpose as the first — to make us vigilant; not only against heretics and unbelievers in disguise, but also against the examples and the snares of those of our brethren who may unfortunately have strayed from the right path.

APPLICATION.— As tares are found among the wheat even on well-cultivated soil, so even it is possible to meet dissipated religious in the holiest communities; and they are the more dangerous if they have talent and seniority. “By their fruits you shall know them;” by their want of discipline, their manner, their spirit of unkindness, of murmuring, criticizing, etc. Pity them, and pray for their conversion; but fly from familiarity with them, and draw closer to those who are distinguished by their fervor and regularity. Have you understood this and acted upon it?

COLLOQUY with your Guardian Angel.

THE LEPER'S PRAYER, AND HIS CURE

1st Prel. Imagine you see the leper before our Lord, and saying to Him, "If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean." (St. Mark 1:40.)

2d Prel. Beg for the same feelings which the leper had when he made this prayer.

POINT I

PRAYER OF THE LEPER

CONSIDERATION.—It pleased our Divine Lord to confirm His wonderful and austere teaching by miracles. The first was the case of the leper: as soon as the poor man saw our Lord afar off, he was filled with hope; and fearless of a rebuff, as every one else was, he came to Him, says the Evangelist, "beseeching Him, and kneeling down said to Him, If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean." (St. Mark 1:40.)

APPLICATION.—Let us try to profit by our reflection on the qualities of this leper's prayer: first, it was made with profound respect and deep humility; he fell down on his knees before Jesus and adored Him as the Ambassador and Son of God; then he had an ardent faith in the omnipotence of Jesus; he firmly believed that our Lord could cure the leprosy, *if He so willed*; he had an entire confidence in the goodness of Jesus, whose praises he had heard, and he had a perfect resignation: "Lord, if Thou wilt," if it is pleasing to Thee, Thou canst cure me. If we made all our prayers with the same feelings, they would be always efficacious.

AFFECTIONS.—Say also to Jesus with the humility and confidence of the leper, "Lord, if Thou wilt," Thou canst instantly cleanse my soul from the leprosy of sin, and render it as fair as when purified by the waters of baptism.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will endeavor not only to keep my soul pure in the sight of God, but to adorn it with virtues and merits.

POINT II

CURE OF THE LEPER

CONSIDERATION.— In this second Point let us bend our whole attention to the Person of our Divine Model and Saviour, Jesus Christ. How did He receive the leper? How did He answer His prayer? Though He was pressed upon by the crowd, He received him with great sweetness, without showing any impatience or disgust at the sight and smell of the leprosy. He listened gently to his prayer, and wrought a miracle. "Jesus, having compassion on him," says St. Mark, "stretched forth His hand, and touching him, saith to him, I will; be thou made clean. And when He had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him." (St. Mark I: 40, 41.)

APPLICATION.— This wonderful miracle greatly increased the faith of the multitude in the teaching of Jesus Christ; and it ought to be no less useful to us, especially when we compare our conduct with that of our Lord. Examine yourself; ask yourself, "When some one comes to beg a service from me at a busy moment, especially if his appearance and manner are disagreeable, how do I receive him and listen to him? Is it impatiently, or crossly, or even harshly; putting him off to another time? If it be thus, I am far from resembling my Divine Model, Jesus, whom I have resolved to imitate as closely as possible." See in what respect your conduct is in contrast with our Lord's, and try to correct it.

AFFECTIONS.— Shame and regret: Desire to atone for your faults.

RESOLUTIONS.— To make greater efforts, even when overwhelmed with cares, to maintain the calmness, gentleness, and amiability so requisite in a religious.

POINT III

GRATITUDE OF THE LEPER

CONSIDERATION.— We can easily imagine what was the joy and gratitude of the leper so suddenly cured. But our Lord did not suffer him to express it before the witnesses of the miracle: "See thou tell no man; but go, shew thyself to the high-priest, and offer for thy cleansing the things that Moses commanded for a testimony to them." (St. Mark 1:44.) But the leper was so overcome with joy that he forgot our Lord's injunction, and *began to publish* and blaze abroad the word.

APPLICATION.— See how our Lord avoided rather than sought the praise and applause of men, so that God only might receive the glory. Do we not do the exact contrary? Let us learn also, like the leper, to show our gratitude to Jesus Christ; and to spread abroad as much as we can the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ. Let us examine ourselves.

COLLOQUY with Jesus, the Divine Physician of our souls.

THE CENTURION OF CAPHARNAUM

BEGS JESUS TO CURE HIS SERVANT

1st Prel. Imagine you see our Divine Lord looking graciously upon the centurion.

2d Prel. Beg for the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ.

POINT I

CHARITY AND CONFIDENCE OF THE CENTURION

CONSIDERATION.—The miraculous cure of the leper wrought at the very gates of Capharnaum was as a ray of light to the Roman centurion who commanded the little garrison of that town. Though but a pagan, he acknowledged Jesus the Master of creation; and hearing that He was near the town, he hoped to obtain a favor from Him, in the cure of a servant who was dear to him, and who suffered from palsy; and he sent Jewish elders to Jesus. They pleaded his cause, saying, "He is worthy that Thou shouldst do this for him; for he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue." (St. Luke 7: 4, 5.)

APPLICATION.—How beautiful is the charity of this Gentile in respect, not of relation or friend, but of a servant! It was an active, generous charity. After having spent much for him on physicians, he hastened to seek help from Jesus, exposing himself to the blame and ridicule of the other pagans. It was a disinterested, universal charity: at his own cost he had built a synagogue for a subjugated people, whose frequent revolts had made them odious to their conquerors. If such was the charity of a man who understood neither its motives nor its supernatural merit, what ought to be ours in respect to our brethren in Jesus Christ? What shame it will be for us if our charity

is less active, less generous, less disinterested than his! Is it not so sometimes? Let us reflect, and examine ourselves, entering into details.

AFFECTIONS.— Pray for the spirit of self-denial and charity.

RESOLUTIONS.— To practice the virtues of meekness, kindness, and charity, not only toward our brethren, but also in our relations with inferiors.

POINT II

HUMILITY AND LIVELY FAITH OF THE CENTURION

CONSIDERATION.—“ And when He had entered into Capharnaum, there came to Him a centurion, beseeching Him, and saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, and is grievously tormented. And Jesus saith to him, I will come and heal him. And the centurion, making answer, said, Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldest enter under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man subject to authority, having under me soldiers, and I say to this, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doth it.” (St. Matt. 8: 5-9.) His meaning was, “ Far easier is it, then, for Thee, who art Master of all creation, to speak to the malady, and it will obey Thee. My servant will be cured.”

APPLICATION.— We all feel the greatest admiration for this centurion, who had been prevented and enlightened by grace. What great humility, what ardent faith, expressed with the frankness and simplicity of a true soldier, was his! And what confidence he had in our Lord's goodness! He told his story, made his petition, and had so firm a conviction of our Lord's power and mercy, that he could not doubt the result. Why have we not always this faith and confidence in

our prayers? We say it is because we are so unworthy; but the centurion had a deeper conviction of his than any one of us. It is, in reality, because we lack a sufficient knowledge of the power and love of our Divine Lord.

AFFECTIONS.—Pray earnestly for grace to know them more fully, and to have recourse to them with increased confidence.

RESOLUTIONS.—When, during preparation for Communion, I ask myself, Who is He that is about to visit my failing heart? and for what purpose does He come? I will imagine that I hear Jesus say to me, “Ego veniam et curabo eum.” “I will come and heal him.”

POINT III

REWARD GIVEN TO THE CENTURION

CONSIDERATION.—The centurion’s prayer, so beautiful in its simplicity, delighted the heart of Jesus. “He marveled,” says the Evangelist, “and said to them that followed Him, Amen I say to you, I have not found so great faith in Israel. . . . And Jesus said to the centurion, Go, and as thou hast believed, so be it done to thee. And the servant was healed at the same hour.” (St. Matt. 8: 10, 13.) This, then, was the reward of the centurion: the immediate and complete cure of his servant, extraordinary praise bestowed on him by the Incarnate Word, and an *everlasting* celebrity through the whole world; for the words which his faith, humility, and confidence brought to his lips are placed by the Church in the mouths of both priests and faithful at the moment of Communion.

APPLICATION AND COLLOQUY.—Let us bless and exalt God’s liberality toward us. We are the living proof of it. Let us make a return for it by a continual and entire self-immolation.

ON FAITH

1st Prel. Imagine you hear Jesus Christ saying to the centurion,
 "As thou hast believed, so be it done to thee."
2d Prel. Beg for increase of faith.

POINT I

NATURE AND NECESSITY OF FAITH

CONSIDERATION.—Faith is the first in the order of virtues; for by it, enlightened from on high, we know God, His infinite attributes, His will, His good pleasure, and His intentions for us in this world and the next. It is evident, as says the Apostle, that "*Sine fide autem impossibile est placere Deo.*" "Without faith it is impossible to please God," (Heb. 11:6;) it is impossible to perform a meritorious and supernatural act of virtue. That we may be able to do so as soon as possible, faith was given to us by baptism on our entrance into life; but, as the Apostle tells us, "*Et hoc non ex vobis, Dei enim donum est.*" "Not of yourselves, for it is the gift of God." (Eph. 2:8.)

APPLICATION.—Faith being the foundation of all virtue, this latter will be so much the more perfect as our faith is greater and more ardent. Let us do all we can to increase it. We can not give it to ourselves, but we can increase it, like any other grace; first by prayer, after the example of the Apostles, when they cried out, "*Adauge nobis fidem.*" "Increase our faith," (St. Luke 17:5;) again, by a continual exercise of it, doing every thing in a spirit of faith, so that we may live by faith; as it is written, "*Justus ex fide vivit.*" "The just man liveth by faith." (Heb. 10:38.) Especially we should try and grow familiar with the thought of God's presence. If we were penetrated with it, we should never sin; we should

pray well, be humble and modest in prosperity, strong and courageous in trials and temptations; we should do even the smallest thing with the greatest care, with a pure intention and ardent love; in one word, we should excel in virtue, and live like saints.

AFFECTIONS.— Beg of God, with the Apostles, to grant you an increase of faith, and ask that its effect may be a vivid consciousness of His omnipresence.

RESOLUTIONS.— Make use of the particular examination as a means of familiarizing yourself with the useful practice of recollection of the presence of God.

POINT II

EXCELLENCE AND ADVANTAGES OF FAITH

CONSIDERATION.— Faith raises us above material things, above what we perceive by our senses and understanding; it raises us unto the invisible, unto God, and the heights of His infinite perfections; it opens to us the splendor, glory, and happiness of our future country, Paradise. By faith our thoughts and aspirations become great and noble; we disdain all that is not eternal, we have no other ambition than that of laying up treasures in heaven. Faith raises us above ourselves, our weaknesses, our inconstancy; we become strong, invincible, even terrible to the devils, like to the first Christians, to those millions of martyrs who, says St. Paul, triumphed by faith over threats and persuasions, over the horrors of prison and exile, even over cruel suffering and death. Read that wonderful picture of faith, Hebrews II. By faith even our most ordinary actions become noble, meritorious, often heroic before God.

APPLICATION.— These thoughts will doubtless rekindle in your heart an ardent desire of excelling in faith, in that lively faith which proves itself by works

and 'by a holy life. By these merits, that is, by the conformity of our actions with our faith, we can judge of its worth and degree. "Vosmetipsos tentate si estis in fide." "Try your own selves," says the Apostle, "if you be in the faith," (II. Cor. 13:5;) if there be not a contradiction between what you believe and what you do. You believe, for instance, that your immortal soul is worth far more care than your body; yet do you not act as though it were otherwise? You believe that God sees you, observes you, reads the depths of your heart; but how often does it happen that when alone you act as if there were no witness of your falsehoods, your grave negligences and omissions, of your vain and useless thoughts? You believe that without the spirit of prayer, which supposes both recollection and mortification, you will be a religious only in name and in habit; yet you prepare your meditation carelessly, you make few efforts to become recollected and mortified. Judge for yourself, after this examen, and see what you have to do from this day forward.

COLLOQUY with our Lord. Accuse yourself of your faults. Humble yourself, ask forgiveness. Offer your resolutions, and pray for grace to continue faithful to them.

RAISING OF THE WIDOW'S SON AT NAIM

1st Prel. Imagine you see a funeral train, and Jesus saying to the corpse, "I say to thee, arise."

2d Prel. Beg the grace of drawing great fruit from this Meditation.

POINT I

JESUS MEETS A FUNERAL TRAIN

CONSIDERATION.—The miracles wrought upon the leper and the centurion's servant, which had excited such wonder, were to be followed by one still more striking — the resurrection of a dead man. St. Luke tells us that "He went into a city that is called Naim, and there went with Him His disciples and a great multitude. And when He came nigh the gate of the city, behold a dead man was carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow; and a great multitude of the city was with her." (St. Luke 7: 11, 12.)

APPLICATION.—What a wonderful picture is here brought before our eyes! How strongly it shows us the folly of those who place their happiness and their hopes in the things of this world! A mother clad in widow's weeds, robbed of all other joys, has still one consolation left to her—an only son. With what happiness does she see him advancing in years, and how often does she dwell hopefully upon his future! Vain is her calculation, fleeting her joy! Death in an instant puts an end to it all, and she is left in solitude and despair. She is an image of the world, the history of those who place their happiness in it.

AFFECTIONS.—Rejoice that you have exchanged the fleeting pleasures of this world for the imperishable joys and blessings of heaven, which you obtain through the grace of your vocation.

RESOLUTIONS.— Let us manifest our gratitude by fidelity in all that our vocation to the religious state requires from us.

POINT II

JESUS, TOUCHED WITH COMPASSION, RAISES THE DEAD

CONSIDERATION.— The crowd which went before Jesus stopped silently at the entrance of the town before the funeral procession, which was coming out at the same moment. Every eye was fixed on the desolate mother, who was weeping and crying out with anguish; “whom when the Lord had seen, being moved with mercy toward her, He said to her, Weep not. And He came near and touched the bier. And they that carried it stood still.” Then, speaking in that tone of authority which belonged to Him as the Master of life and death, He said, “Young man, I say to thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak; and He gave him to his mother.” (St. Luke 7: 13-15.)

APPLICATION.— When you see the sweetness and tenderness of the Heart of Jesus for a stranger who had asked nothing from him, ought you not to blush at your want of confidence in Him? How often you are heard to say, “I try in vain to be as fervent again as I once was, or I strive in vain to bring back this young man, or this sick person, or this hardened sinner, to the right path: it will require nothing less than a miracle.” That may be; but why hesitate to ask for this miracle of grace, why doubt that you will obtain it? Is it not doing an injury to the Heart of Jesus to believe that He will do less for the life of a soul than that of the body? It is supposed by many of the Fathers that in our Lord’s mind the bodily resurrection which He wrought at the gate of Naim was a

figure of those spiritual resurrections which the Apostles and their successors were to accomplish in every quarter of the world. And then it was *because of his mother* that Jesus raised the dead man. Be careful, when you desire to obtain any great favor, to implore the intercession of your Mother, of Mary, and you will feel redoubled confidence.

AFFECTIONS.— Ask pardon for your past distrust.

RESOLUTIONS.— When seeking any great favor from our Lord, I will ask it in the name of His holy Mother. I will remind Him of her agony, when, her soul pierced with a sword of sorrow, she stood at the foot of the Cross; and, through her intercession, He will not fail to grant my request.

POINT III

JESUS BLESSED BY THE CROWD

CONSIDERATION.— When the multitude who surrounded Him saw the miracle He had wrought, “there came a fear on them; and they glorified God, saying, A great prophet is risen up among us, and God has visited His people.” (St. Luke 7: 16.)

APPLICATION.— God is continually working miracles of power and goodness, both in the order of nature and grace. We must not merely look on at them, but, imitating these good people, show our gratitude by praising and blessing God, and by trying, when occasion offers, to inspire others with the same feelings of admiration and gratitude. How have you acted in this respect?

COLLOQUY with the Blessed Virgin.

MESSAGE OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

TO JESUS

1st Prel. Behold St. John the Baptist in prison.

2d Prel. Beg for resignation and constancy like the Saints in adversity.

POINT I

CAPTIVITY AND ZEAL OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

CONSIDERATION.—“Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, sending two of his disciples he said to Him, Art Thou He that art to come, or look we for another?” (St. Matt. 11:2, 3.) Why did the holy precursor send this message? He knew well that our Lord was the Messiah. He did not want to be released from prison; for he knew that “blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice’ sake.” But he wished his disciples to see Jesus, to know Him, to attach themselves to Him, and follow Him.

APPLICATION.—We are here taught most practical lessons. John the Baptist had lived a holy life, and he was thrown into prison, apparently abandoned. Jesus does nothing for him; but he never complains; his patience is not exhausted, his faith is unshaken. And I, who have done so little — I give way to impatience, to complaints, and mistrust, when I do not succeed in my undertakings, or when I am left to myself in trouble. Then, again, the holy precursor was suffering the agony of a harsh captivity; he was severely tried, both physically and morally; but none of this could quench the ardor of his zeal. He still fulfilled the mission which had been given to him. How far am I from possessing such strength of mind, such heroic constancy? A little indisposition, a slight suffering, is

sufficient to cast me down, and to make me neglect the whole or part of my duty to God and my neighbor, and to act as if I had no one else to occupy myself about in this world. Is this not true?

AFFECTIONS.— Acknowledge your faults with shame and regret.

RESOLUTIONS.— Not to give way to anxiety or fear when attacked by slight or passing indisposition.

POINT II

ANSWER OF JESUS TO THE MESSENGERS OF ST. JOHN

CONSIDERATION.— When the disciples asked, “ Art Thou He that art to come? ” (the Messiah promised by the Prophets,) our Lord answered them by actions, working various miracles before their eyes which had been foretold by the prophet Isaias; proving to them thus, both by miracles and the accomplishment of prophecy, that He was really the Messiah. Then when He sent them away, He said, “ Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen.” (St. Matt. 11 : 4.)

APPLICATION.— After the example of our Divine Master, we should show more by our actions than by our words that we are truly the children of that God who is purity, sanctity, and goodness itself; let us prove to the world that we are the children and heirs of our Holy Founder, by reproducing His virtues in us, by showing that we are animated by His spirit. Of what use is it to bear a noble name, if our conduct is not in accordance with it? Besides, will not our words be far more persuasive if our life is in conformity with them? Are you convinced of this?

AFFECTIONS.— Pray for grace to persevere and advance in the spirit of your holy vocation.

RESOLUTIONS.— To devote yourself to the practice of solid virtue, recollecting these words of the Apostle,

“Non enim in sermone est regnum Dei, sed in virtute.”
“The kingdom of God, is not in speech, but in power.”
(1. Cor. 4: 20.)

POINT III

OUR LORD'S PRAISE OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

CONSIDERATION.— One of the greatest glories of St. John the Baptist is, that he was publicly praised by the Son of God, who only can justly appreciate virtue, because He alone can see the depths of the heart. “And when they went their way,” says the Evangelist, “Jesus began to say to the multitude concerning John, What went you out in the desert to see? a reed shaken with the wind? But what went you out to see? a man clothed in soft garments? But what went you out for to see? a prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet.” (St. Matt. 11: 7-9.)

APPLICATION.— The praise of men is worth nothing. It is vain, because they only see the exterior. But let us try to be worthy of approbation from Him who sees the heart, and who will judge us. The means of obtaining it is to make the two virtues which He especially praised in His precursor our own: that is, perseverance in a holy life, and an entire mortification of our disorderly inclinations. But alas! is it not precisely in these things we are wanting? Like the “reed shaken by the wind,” we are perpetually inconstant to our resolutions, bringing nothing to a good end, gratifying our senses and our ease. Let us acknowledge this, and humble and correct ourselves.

COLLOQUY with the Apostle St. James the Less, who was the disciple of St. John the Baptist before his election to the Apostleship. The Church celebrates his Feast with much solemnity this day.

VARIOUS EFFECTS OF OUR LORD'S MIRACLES

1st Prel. Imagine you see Jesus surrounded by the crowd; praised by some, criticized by others.

2d Prel. Beg for grace to draw great fruit from this Meditation.

POINT I

THE MIRACLES OF JESUS ENLIGHTEN AND TOUCH THE HUMBLE

CONSIDERATION.— The miracles wrought before the eyes of St. John's messengers were almost immediately followed by a double miracle—the deliverance and cure of a possessed man. “Then was offered to Him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb; and He healed him, so that he spoke and saw. And all the multitudes were amazed, and said, Is not this the Son of David?” (the Messiah who is to come of that race.) (St. Matt. 12: 22, 23.)

APPLICATION.— Recognize in this possessed man the misery of the Christian in a state of mortal sin. 1st. He is really in the possession of the devil, and will remain in it for all eternity if he dies in his sin. 2d. He is blind to the horror of his state, to the enormity of his sins, and the fatal effects they will have upon him in time and in eternity. 3d. He is also dumb—dumb as to prayer, dumb as to asking counsel, often dumb as to making a sincere confession. If you have lived—and that, perhaps, for a long time—in this state, and have happily escaped from it, humbly acknowledge that you owe it to a miracle of grace and mercy from Jesus Christ. How many others have persevered in it, and have been surprised by death!

AFFECTIONS.—Admiration and praise. Gratitude for the predilection manifested toward you by our Lord.

RESOLUTIONS.—To guard, in sacramental confession, against the snares of the dumb devil.

POINT II

THEY BLIND AND HARDEN THE PROUD

CONSIDERATION.—The people who were free from prejudice and malice formed a wise judgment concerning our Lord and His actions; but the Scribes and Pharisees, governed by pride and jealousy, shut their eyes to the light, and hardened themselves in their hatred of Jesus. However, they could not deny the fact of a double miracle having taken place; so they attributed it to the devil. "*Quoniam Beelzebub habet, et quia in principe dæmoniorum ejicit dæmonia.*" "He hath Beelzebub; and by the prince of the devils He casteth out devils," (St. Mark 3:22,) said they, speaking against even common sense. The Lord confuted them by saying, "If Satan cast out Satan, how then shall his kingdom stand?" (St. Matt. 12:26.)

APPLICATION.—We have heard the language of those whom passion has blinded, and we see that it is absurd, and fully displays the motives of those who use it. Have you not often remarked the same, and have you not been the occasion of others remarking the same in you? On the other hand, consider the calm and dignified language of our Divine Lord. He simply refuted in a tone of authority the horrible accusation by which they hoped to destroy His influence; and He did this only to preserve the people from being deceived. May His conduct be our model! If it be necessary to justify ourselves, let us do it calmly, not from self-love or vanity, but from zeal for religion. Have we acted thus?

AFFECTIONS.—Pray for a lively horror of pride and jealousy, the vices which blinded and hardened the Pharisees.

RESOLUTIONS.—To guard against the delusions of these vices.

POINT III

PRAISE GIVEN TO SOME, CONDEMNATION TO OTHERS

CONSIDERATION.—“I confess to Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones.” (St. Matt. 11:25.) Thus does the Son of God praise the simple faith and humble docility of the people, and His words are full of consolation and encouragement. But terrible is the language in which He describes the pride and hypocrisy of the Pharisees and Scribes who taught the people error, “O generation of vipers, how can you speak good things, whereas you are evil?” (St. Matt. 12:34.) How terrific, also, are the threats and reproaches that He pronounces at the same time upon the impenitent cities: “Wo to thee, Corozain; wo to thee, Bethsaida: for if in Tyre and Sidon had been wrought the miracles that have been wrought in you, they had long ago done penance in sackcloth and ashes; and thou, Capharnaum, shalt thou be exalted up to heaven? thou shalt go down even unto hell. For if in Sodom had been wrought the miracles that have been wrought in thee, perhaps it had remained unto this day; but I say to you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee.” (St. Matt. 11:21, 23, 24.)

APPLICATION.—We who live in the midst of a great abundance of grace and means of sanctification must take care not to draw down on ourselves such severe reproaches, such terrific threats; we must abhor all that savors of the pride and hypocrisy with which the Pharisees were reproached, and strive with all our hearts to preserve the simplicity of the dove and the humble docility of childhood, at whatever age or whatever degree of knowledge we may have arrived.

COLLOQUY with St. Anne, whose feast we celebrate this day.

MARY MAGDALENE AT THE FEET OF JESUS

IN THE HOUSE OF SIMON THE PHARISEE

1st Prel. Imagine you see Magdalene in the midst of the guests, washing the feet of Jesus with her tears.

2d Prel. Beg that you may be animated with the same feelings as she had at that moment.

POINT I

ENTRANCE OF MAGDALENE INTO THE BANQUET-HALL

CONSIDERATION.—“And one of the Pharisees desired Him to eat with him. And He went into the house of the Pharisee, and sat down to meat; and behold, a woman * that was in the city, a sinner, when she knew that He sat at meat in the Pharisee’s house, brought an alabaster box of ointment.” (St. Luke 7: 36, 37.) She not only entered the house, but went into the banquet-hall, and cast herself at the feet of Jesus. How much it must have cost her to brave human respect in this way! Weigh all the circumstances of it. But she was entirely possessed by the love of Jesus, who had already delivered her from seven devils; and, prevented by grace, she was impatient to give Him a proof of her sincere repentance, and to make a public reparation for the scandal she had given. An occasion offered itself, and she eagerly seized it, trampling under foot all human considerations.

APPLICATION.—Let us learn from this to follow the impulse of grace promptly and generously; to seize upon all the occasions which Providence gives us of doing good, and especially of repairing the harm caused by our bad examples; and for this end to brave, if need

* According to the most general opinion, this woman was Mary Magdalene, the sister of Lazarus.

be, human respect, the ridicule or criticisms of the world. Have you acted thus?

AFFECTIONS.— Pray for a generous and noble heart.

RESOLUTIONS.— Having once formed a resolution, I will act on it promptly, and without hesitation.

POINT II

MAGDALENE GIVES PROOFS OF HER REPENTANCE AND LOVE

CONSIDERATION.— As soon as Magdalene saw our Lord, she went straight to Him, and “standing behind at His feet, she began to wash His feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head, and kissed His feet, and anointed them with the ointment.” (St. Luke 7: 38.) Mary Magdalene thus shows us what *perfect contrition* is. She is filled with the deepest sorrow, and inflamed with ardent love. She has no other regret than that of having offended God, and no other desire than that of pleasing Him.

APPLICATION.— When we are at the feet of our confessor, who, in the Sacrament of Penance, holds the place of Jesus Christ to us, let us try to fill our hearts with feelings of perfect contrition. We shall certainly do it if we bring before our minds its immense advantages — a more entire or even total remission of our sins, and the strength to resist temptations, and overcome all obstacles to our sanctification.

AFFECTIONS.— An ardent desire to experience those sentiments of contrition which spring from love.

RESOLUTIONS.— Pray earnestly for them. Endeavor to excite them in your heart, particularly before confession.

POINT III

RECEPTION THAT OUR LORD GAVE TO MAGDALENE

CONSIDERATION.—“The Pharisee who had invited Him, seeing it, spoke within himself, saying, This man, if He were a prophet, would know surely who or what manner of woman this is that toucheth Him, that she is a sinner.” Jesus instantly took up her defense, and said, “Simon, dost thou see this woman? I entered into thy house, thou gavest Me no water for My feet: but she with tears hath washed My feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but she with ointment hath anointed My feet. Wherefore I say to thee, Many sins are forgiven her because she hath loved much. And He said to her, Thy sins are forgiven: go in peace.” (St. Luke 7: 44, 46–48, 50.)

APPLICATION.—Do you wish to know the way of satisfying God’s infinite justice for those numerous faults into which, from human infirmity, you fall daily? The Lord tells you what it is: “Love much, and many sins will be forgiven you.” Frequently make acts of love, even if it be only these few words, “My God, I love Thee; pardon me for having offended Thee.” And often, say ascetical writers, this act will be one of perfect contrition, though you have not had the intention of making one.

COLLOQUY with Saint Mary Magdalene.

RETURN OF THE DEVIL:

OR FALLING BACK INTO SIN

1st Prel. Imagine you see a house invaded for the second time by an enemy.

2d Prel. Beg for grace to know and to avoid the snares of the devil.

POINT I

THE DEVIL DRIVEN OUT

CONSIDERATION.—Magdalene, when she had once been delivered from the seven devils who possessed her, never gave them admittance again. All do not imitate her. Our Lord warns us against this terrible misfortune, and unveils to us the machinations of the devils. “When an unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none.” (St. Matt. 12: 43.) The insult of his expulsion will not let him rest. He wearies himself to find out the means of regaining what he has lost, and is determined to overcome every obstacle. “Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out.” (St. Matt. 12: 44.)

APPLICATION.—Do we take as much trouble to keep ourselves in grace and fervor as the devil does to rob us of them? Alas! scarcely have we gone back to God by a good confession, or regained fervor by a good retreat, than we lose our compunction, become dissipated, delude ourselves by a false security, and have no fear of the enemy who is watching us, and lying in wait for the moment when he can take us by surprise. How often have we fallen back into sin! How many means of sanctification have we lost which might have been prevented if we had been on our guard, watching and praying! What does experience say to you in this respect?

AFFECTIONS.—"Ab insidijs diaboli, libera nos, Domine." "From the snares of the devil, O Lord! deliver us." (Litany.)

RESOLUTIONS.—To fix in your memory the words of St. Peter, "The devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about, seeking whom he may devour." (1. St. Peter 5:8.)

POINT II

THE DEVIL RETURNING

CONSIDERATION.—The devil does not confine himself to plans and resolutions: he takes the most violent means, bringing against us, if necessary, an infernal legion, and coming, he findeth it, says our Lord, "empty, swept, and garnished," (by grace.) (St. Matt. 12:44,) Then he goeth and taketh seven other spirits more wicked than himself. This means many others more crafty, more wily than himself, who attack us on all sides, in all ways, by joy and sorrow, by pleasure and pain, by prosperity and adversity, by love and by hate, by presumption, and by despondency or despair.

APPLICATION.—The devil carefully watches our state and the dispositions of our hearts, whilst we either neglect to examine ourselves, or do it very superficially. The devil does not rely on his own strength, but seeks for help; whilst we, confining too much in ourselves, do not, even in the most violent temptations, run for aid to God and to the Saints. Our pride prevents us from manifesting ourselves to our spiritual directors, and seeking aid and counsel from them; and pride separates us from God, and deprives us of the grace we need to sustain us. How terrible is this! It is thus that we also come to the assistance of our greatest enemy.

AFFECTIONS.—Acknowledge your faults with shame and regret.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will henceforth be wiser and more careful of my own interests.

POINT III

THE DEVIL TRIUMPHANT

CONSIDERATION.—When by presumption, or negligence, or weakness, we have opened our hearts to the devil, what takes place? He enters in “and dwells there,” says our Lord, “*Et fiunt novissima hominis pejora prioribus.*” “And the last state of that man is made worse than the first.” (St. Matt. 12:45.) Why is this? Because, by repeated sin, the horror of it diminishes, the withdrawal of so much grace weakens the soul, and light and faith are darkened, bad habits are formed, and become, as St. Austin said, speaking from experience, a second nature. “*Fit habitus peccandi, et habitus fit altera natura.*” It is the greatest misery that can befall us.

APPLICATION.—Let us try to understand this misery. Let us have a lively fear of a habit even of venial sin, and especially of a state of lukewarmness. It is so difficult to get out of it, more so for a religious than for a secular, who is less familiar with holy thoughts, and less guilty of ingratitude toward God. When such a thing takes place, says St. Bernard, “I look upon a change as more wonderful than the raising of the dead to life.” Let us see how we stand, what we have to fear, what remains for us to do.

COLLOQUY with St. Anthony, Hermit, remarkable for his victories over the demons. Beg of him to obtain for you a share in the prudence, confidence, and courage which animated him.

OUR LORD'S TEACHING

ON THE RELATIONSHIP WHICH WE CAN HAVE WITH
HIM

1st Prel. Imagine you see Jesus instructing the people, and receiving an invitation to come to His Mother and His brethren.

2d Prel. Beg for a detachment from all undue natural affection for your relations.

POINT I

RELATIONSHIP OF JESUS CHRIST, AND WITH JESUS
CHRIST

CONSIDERATION.— An apparently accidental incident interrupted our Lord's discourse. People came to tell Him that His Mother and other near relatives were come from Nazareth, and stood without, seeking to speak to Him. "And one said to Him, Behold, Thy Mother and Thy brethren * stand without, seeking Thee. But He answering him that told Him, said, Who is My Mother, and who are My brethren? And stretching forth His hand toward His disciples, He said, Behold My Mother and My brethren," (St. Matt. 12: 47-49,) or those who stand to Me in the place of mother and brethren.

APPLICATION.— What does our Divine Lord teach us by this? That when the glory of God, the salvation of souls, or our own sanctification is in question, we ought to forget all that attaches us to earth, and that, when necessary, we should sacrifice the affection we have for our relations to the obedience and fidelity we owe to God. In other words, we ought to love our relations and friends only in God, for God, and as God. This is the meaning of that rule, which br²₂

* See Vol. I., Supplementary Month, Ninth Day.

the religious to try and turn the affection which they naturally and lawfully have for their parents, brothers, and sisters into a spiritual love. Have you conformed to these rules of conduct?

AFFECTIONS.—Pray for grace to do so generously during the remainder of your life.

RESOLUTIONS.—To guard against any excess of natural affection for those related to you.

POINT II

HOW WE CAN BECOME BRETHREN OF JESUS CHRIST

CONSIDERATION.—"For whosoever shall do the will of My Father that is in heaven, he is My brother, and sister, and mother." (St. Matt. 12:50.) He that does the will of God can become the brother of Jesus Christ in this sense—that by his conformity in all things with the will of God, which is also that of Jesus, he possesses a perfect *fraternity* of thoughts and feelings with Him; in this sense, again, that by faithfully fulfilling the divine will, he possesses that charity which makes us adopted children of God, and thus *brothers* of Jesus Christ. He Himself gave that name to His disciples when, after His resurrection, He said to the holy women, "Ite; nunciate fratribus meis, ut eant in Galilæam." "Go, tell My brethren, that they go into Galilee." (St. Matt. 28:10.)

APPLICATION.—How important, then, it is for us to make great efforts to excel in the practice of a perfect conformity of our will with that of God! Besides many other advantages which we all know, it brings us the title of *brothers* of Jesus Christ; it identifies us, so to speak, with Him, and makes us partakers of all those immense blessings which He won by His passion and His death. What value do we set on this practice? What progress have we made in it?

AFFECTIONS.— May it be done, O Lord! to me, in me, and by me, according to Thy most holy will, now and for evermore, Amen. (Prayer of the Ven. Du Pont.)

RESOLUTIONS.— To be zealous in obeying the commands of superiors, especially those which oppose our natural inclinations.

POINT III

HOW WE CAN BECOME THE MOTHER OF JESUS CHRIST

CONSIDERATION.—“ For whosoever shall do the will of My Father that is in heaven, he is My brother, and sister, and mother.” Is my mother? There is something, then, greater still than becoming the brother of Jesus Christ — something more marvelous, more inexplicable. Pope St. Gregory thus explains it: “ He becomes the mother of Christ who, by his preaching, causes Him to be born in the hearts of men by making Him known and loved by those who were strangers to Him.” This is truly a spiritual maternity, but is it less noble and less meritorious than maternity according to the flesh?

APPLICATION.— We can all attain this divine maternity, although we be neither preachers nor confessors, by trying by every means in our power to help on any work for the propagation of the faith; by offering to God our prayers, our communions, our penances, and our sufferings for the conversion of infidels, heretics, and schismatics; by trying to cause Jesus Christ to be born and to live in the souls of others whenever an occasion presents itself. Have you done this? How can you improve on what you have done?

COLLOQUY with St. Martha, the sister of Lazarus, and of Mary Magdalene, whose Feast we celebrate this day.

OF MISPLACED AFFECTION

TOWARD OUR RELATIONS

1st Prel. Listen to Jesus Christ saying, "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me." (St. Matt. 10: 37.)

2d Prel. Beg the grace of freedom from all misplaced affection.

There are three things especially which tend to produce and develop in the heart of a religious a misplaced affection toward relations; three things, therefore, against which we should be on our guard, that is, *unnecessary visits, misplaced compassion and zeal.*

POINT I

MISPLACED VISITS

CONSIDERATIONS.— The religious who tries to create and multiply motives and excuses for visiting his relations exposes himself to great dangers, and even to losing his vocation, or at least the spirit of his vocation. St. Basil tells us this, and explains it thus: These misplaced visits can not fail — 1st, to turn away the attention of the religious from what he should do for God, his own perfection, and zeal for souls; 2d, to fill his imagination with memories and dangerous ideas at the sight of certain persons or places which witnessed his falls in past life; 3d, to deprive him of peace of soul by keeping him always in anxiety about his relations, their affairs, their undertakings, their successes, their reverses, their domestic afflictions, etc.; 4th, to cause him to lose, little by little, the spirit of his holy vocation.

APPLICATION.— If experience has not taught you the truth of these observations, return thanks to God,

and strengthen the determination, which every good religious ought to have, of avoiding all visits to relations which are not required for very solid reasons.

AFFECTIONS.— Ask of God the grace to die to the world and to all those whom, for His love, you have left in the world.

RESOLUTIONS.— To endeavor to spare our superiors the importunities of those relatives, who, without sufficient reason, pay frequent visits, or expect that we should visit them. To avoid constant and useless correspondence, while adhering to the rules of politeness, and replying without delay to such letters as require an answer.

POINT II

MISPLACED ZEAL

CONSIDERATION.— The masters of spiritual life call *misplaced* that zeal which religious imagine they have about their relations, even when they desire to reclaim them from sin. They say that this mission does not devolve on the religious. There is reason to fear, unless it be imposed by obedience, that it may do much harm; and they cite a number of instances where attention to relations by religious has caused them to imbibe the spirit and love of the world. How much stronger reason is there for looking on the eagerness that a religious has about the temporal affairs of his family as misplaced and dangerous, whether it be schemes for their fortune or elevation, or whether it be to deliver them from some pecuniary or commercial embarrassment!

APPLICATION.— We should always remember that we are dead to the world, and live only to God; that we should be entirely devoted to the great business of our sanctification; and that the less we occupy our mind with our relations and friends, the more readily

God will hear the prayers we offer up for their temporal and spiritual happiness. Have you always acted according to these truly wise counsels?

AFFECTIONS.—As in the preceding Point.

RESOLUTIONS.—To those relatives who may seek from us services which we can not perform, or who confide to us their domestic troubles, we should reply that we will recommend the matter to God, this being the most efficacious means by which we can adjust them.

POINT III

MISPLACED COMPASSION

CONSIDERATION.—That feeling of compassion which causes us to share in the sufferings of our relations is not an imperfection; but if it disturbs our peace and prevents our fulfillment of duty, and if it goes so far as to make us waver in our vocation and abandon it that we may help our family, it is worse than misplaced, it is sinful. The compassion for relations has been, says St. Jerome, to many religious an occasion of apostasy and damnation. “*Quanti monachorum dum patris matrisque miserentur, suas animas perdiderunt.*” (Req. Monach.)

APPLICATION.—If we are ever tried by these great temptations let us recollect that we are publicly engaged to the service of God not by *conditional* but by *absolute* vows, and that He for whose love we have left our relations knows how to turn the trials He is pleased to send us to our good. However, these temptations find little entrance into the hearts of religious, unless they be lukewarm, and little attached to their vocation.

COLLOQUY with St. Aloysius Gonzaga, who was remarkable for detachment from the world and from family ties.

FEAST OF ST. IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA,*

FOUNDER OF THE COMPANY OF JESUS

1st *Prel.* Imagine you see the Saint in heavenly glory.

2d *Prel.* Beg of him to obtain for us fidelity to grace.

POINT I

WONDERFUL OPERATIONS OF GRACE IN ST. IGNATIUS

CONSIDERATION.—“*Gratia Dei, sum id quod sum.*” “By the grace of God, I am what I am.” (1. Cor. 15: 10.) These words of the Apostle can most suitably be placed in the mouth of St. Ignatius. There are, indeed, few saints in whom the operations of grace were more manifest and more wonderful. We see how gradually it brought him to the end destined for him. In the divine decrees, Ignatius was to found a religious order intended to arrest the progress of heresy in the sixteenth century, and to repair the losses it would cause the Church. Yet, up to the age of thirty years, he pursued the phantom of military glory, till at last, wounded and exhausted, he laid himself down on a bed of suffering. Then did grace begin its work, first by showing him the nothingness of this world, and inspiring him with the desire of repairing his past faults by severe penance. While he thus devoted himself for ten whole months in the grotto of Manreza, he was prepared by divers trials and frequent ecstasies for the interior life and the direction of souls. He became a consummate master of spiritual life, as we discover by his wonderful book of the *Spiritual Exercises*, which he then wrote. But he was further destined to become an Apostle, and the father of a vast number of apostolic men; and yet Ignatius was an uneducated man! Grace gave him the desire and means of acquiring knowledge by secretly leading his

* Born 1491; first superior-general of the order, 1541; bull of approbation issued September 21, 1540; died July 31, 1556; beatified, 1609; canonized, 1622.

steps to the University of Paris. For there, prepared for him and ready for his hands, were the young students who were to form the nucleus of the new order he was to found. The unction of grace drawn from the spiritual exercises made them united in one desire of consecrating themselves forever to God by the vows of religion, of offering themselves to the Vicar of Jesus Christ, to be sent to preach anywhere, and particularly to devote themselves to the education of youth. They carried out their intention; and Pope Paul III., after reading the summary of the rules of the Institute, presented to him under the title of the *Company of Jesus*, cried out, "Digitus Dei est hic." "The finger of God is here." (1540.) Ignatius, guided by grace, governed the infant society so wisely for sixteen years that it received the commendation of the Council of Trent, and extended rapidly to the ends of the earth. He himself was fifty-three years later reckoned among the Saints, (1609.)

APPLICATION.—Recall to your mind your past years, and especially the beginning and the progress of your vocation, and you will be firmly convinced that an especial grace has also prevented and sustained you throughout.

AFFECTIONS.—Admiration, thanksgiving, confidence in God.

RESOLUTIONS.—To be ever attentive and obedient to the voice and impulses of grace.

POINT II

ST. IGNATIUS'S WONDERFUL CORRESPONDENCE WITH GRACE

CONSIDERATION.—As soon as the light of grace penetrated into the soul of Ignatius, he set himself to repair the past, and to attain what his vocation required from him. He secretly left the castle of Loyola, hung up his sword before the altar of our Lady in the sanctuary of Montserrat, clothed himself

as a poor man, and begged his bread; he made a general confession with tears and sobs, and retired to Manreza, where he inflicted sufferings on his body the very history of which makes us shudder. Having thus become a new man in Jesus Christ, and being consumed with divine love, he gave himself up to zeal for souls; but that he might attain more success with others, he pursued the study of letters at Alcala, and afterward at Paris applied himself to the higher sciences. With invincible perseverance he overcame the difficulties which he had to encounter in this long course of study, and especially in the formation and establishment of the new order, the plan of which he had learnt by grace. While he composed the Constitutions, he withdrew himself from others, was almost always on his knees, fasting or praying, that what he wrote might be in accordance with the will of God, and of a nature to bring about the *greater glory of God*. We should remark that these last words, which became the motto of the Saint, were repeated in the Constitutions more than three hundred and sixty times. For Ignatius, absolutely dead to self-love and worldly glory, lived for God only. It was the fruit of his unwavering fidelity to grace.

APPLICATION.—After the example of St. Ignatius, let us cooperate generously and perseveringly with grace. It will be our counsel in doubts, our consolation in troubles, our support in the spiritual combat. It will bring us that crown of glory promised to those who, taking it for their guide, seek in every thing the *greater glory of God*.

COLLOQUY with St. Ignatius. You may here recite the prayer with which St. Francis Xavier terminated all his letters to the Saint, who was then his superior: "Prostrate at thy feet, O father of my soul! I beg of thee to intercede constantly for me with God, that He may grant me grace to know and to accomplish in all things His most holy will."

PARABLE OF THE SOWER

1st Prel. Behold Jesus sitting in a boat and speaking to the multitude assembled on the shore of the lake.

2d Prel. Beg the grace of attaining the end that our Lord proposes to us in this parable.

POINT I

SEED FALLING BY THE WAYSIDE

CONSIDERATION.—We have now come to that time in our Lord's ministry (toward the middle of the second year) when it pleased Him to present great truths to the people under the familiar but attractive form of parables. One of the most remarkable was the sower. "The sower," said He, "went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. And other some fell upon a rock, and as soon as it had sprung up, it withered away, because it had no moisture." (St. Luke 8: 5, 6.)

APPLICATION.—Let us tarry here, that we may study the practical lessons of the first part of the parable. Our Lord Himself explains them to us. The seed is the word of God, and they by the wayside are they that hear; then the devil cometh, and taketh the word out of their heart, lest believing they should be saved. Two things are here pointed out to us as preventing us from deriving the fruit which our Meditation on the word of God ought to produce; the first is dissipation of mind, which the devil makes use of to banish good thoughts from our hearts; and second, hardness of heart, which prevents them from penetrating into our souls, and taking root there. A careful examination will convince you of this.

AFFECTIONS.—Humble yourself before God, and

lament your distractions and negligence, your hardness and insensibility.

RESOLUTIONS.—To endeavor to acquire compunction of heart, and recollection through the practice of the particular examination.

POINT II

SEED SOWN AMONG THORNS

CONSIDERATION.—“And other some,” continues our Lord, “fell among thorns, and the thorns growing up with it choked it.” (St. Luke 8: 7.) At the request of the Apostles, the Divine Master deigned to explain this second part of the parable also. “And that which fell among thorns are they who have heard, and going their way, are choked with the cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and yield no fruit.” (St. Luke 8: 14.)

APPLICATION.—Let us pity the lot of those Christians who are obliged, by their position, to live and work out their salvation in the midst of the troubles of the world. What perpetual difficulties they meet with in trying to listen to the word of God, and to rule their conduct by it! And faith also is, as it were, stifled and dead in the greater number of men. We should, then, be fools and our own enemies, if, after having with great pain torn ourselves away from the anxieties and dissipation of the world, we let ourselves be drawn into them again, either by too frequent intercourse with people of the world, and by useless visits, or by giving too much time and attention to reading the newspapers, or listening to the conversation of the day, or by letting ourselves be surrounded by our relations, who try to interest us in their temporal affairs, their enterprises, their plans for success and fortune, their sorrows and domestic

disputes. It is evident that if we yield to this snare of the devil, our fate will be the same as that of seculars — that the germ of spiritual progress, even the germ of religious life, will be stifled in us. We ought, then, to be on our guard. Have you always done this?

AFFECTIONS.— Pray for grace to discern and avoid the snares of the devil.

RESOLUTIONS.— Carefully to avoid interfering in affairs foreign to our vocation, and to the office which we hold.

POINT III

SEED FALLING ON GOOD GROUND

CONSIDERATION.—“And other seed fell on good ground, and being sprung up, yielded fruit a hundred fold,” (St. Luke 8: 8;) meaning, according to the explanation of Jesus Christ, “That on the good ground are they who, in a good and very good heart, hearing the word keep it, and bring forth fruit in patience,” (St. Luke 8: 15,) “the one thirty, the other sixty, and another a hundred.” (St. Mark 4: 20.)

APPLICATION.— We desire to be in this last number. What means should we take to attain it? Our Lord has told us to hear and meditate on the Divine word with a heart free from disorderly affections, and, above all things, desirous of knowing the truth, and decided to embrace it. Is this our habitual state? Let us see in what we can and ought to improve.

COLLOQUY with our Divine Master.

FEAST OF ST. ALPHONSUS LIGUORI,

FOUNDER OF THE ORDER OF THE MOST HOLY
REDEEMER *

1st Prel. Imagine you see the Saint in ecstasy before our Lady's image.

2d Prel. Beg the grace of walking courageously in the Saint's footsteps.

POINT I

ST. ALPHONSUS INCITES US TO LABOR

CONSIDERATION.— We ought to seek in the lives of the Saints not only lessons, but encouragement. We shall find many of these in the life of St. Alphonsus. First of all, we find a powerful encouragement to labor, which, in the hard kind of life we have embraced, is often very necessary for us. From his ordination until his extreme old age, the Saint never ceased to preach, to hear confessions, to give retreats and missions. To these labors he added, for thirty years, the government of a diocese, and that of his numerous congregation for forty-two years more. Here was enough, indeed, to fill up the life of any man, but Alphonsus had made a vow *never to lose time*, and, incredible though it seems, he also found time to compose (besides a great number of small treatises) more than fifty-two books, some of which, such as his *Moral Theology* and the *Glories of Mary*, are so filled with quotations that it is evident that he had read the works of all who had written before him about morals and our Lady. And laboring thus, the Saint, though feeble in health, lived ninety years.

* Born at Naples, 1696; made priest, 1726; first superior of his congregation, 1732; bishop, 1762; resigned his see, 1775; died, August 1st, 1787; beatified, 1816; canonized, 1839.

APPLICATION.— Take care not to imitate those religious who are so occupied about their health that they withdraw from work, never dare to undertake any thing great or laborious, and finally become a burden to the community and to themselves. Rather imitate those who, though feeble in health, seek a remedy for their habitual infirmities in labor. Regular work prolongs life, and St. Alphonsus is a proof of it.

AFFECTIONS.— Praise God for the great good effected by His servant. Pray for the spirit of labor and order, combined with generosity of heart.

RESOLUTIONS.— Not to yield readily to the fear of undermining your health.

POINT II

ST. ALPHONSUS INCITES US TO ZEAL

CONSIDERATION.— The long life of the Saint was an uninterrupted exercise of zeal. He exercised it in almost every town and village in the kingdom of Naples, and his zeal was always rewarded by extraordinary conversions, often by striking miracles. More than a hundred of these are cited in the process of his canonization: sometimes he was seen to be raised from the ground while he celebrated or preached; at times, interrupting the sermon, he asked prayers for some great person who was dying in a distant spot; sometimes he pointed out to those who consulted him what they had hidden in the depths of their hearts; often, with the sign of the cross, he cured those dangerously ill; and sometimes, even, he was present at the same time in two places: thus, without leaving Naples, he was present at the death of Pope Clement XIV., (22d Sept. 1774.)

APPLICATION.— If we wish to obtain great favors from God, we should be zealous. This we can all be in different ways. But after the example of the Saint,

we should exercise our zeal with a pure intention, having nothing in view but the glory of God and the good of souls. Is it thus that we have always acted?

AFFECTIONS.—Let us pray for grace to labor much and long, and with great fruit in the vineyard of the Lord.

RESOLUTIONS.—Animate yourself, when necessary, to the zealous practice of good works by reflecting on the celestial glory which will be their reward.

POINT III

ST. ALPHONSUS INCITES US TO DEVOTION TO OUR LADY

CONSIDERATION.—There are few saints who have had such a tender love for Mary, and who have increased the devotion to her so much by their sermons and writings. Among the latter, the incomparable treatise of the *Glories of Mary*, full both of unction and learning, has been translated into all languages, and has given everywhere a fresh impulse to the devotion toward the Queen of Heaven. And she in return was pleased to pour favors on Alphonsus, and even to glorify him before men. One day in particular, when preaching at Amalfi, before an immense audience, he invoked Mary, and suddenly he was lifted some feet above the pulpit, and shone radiantly with a celestial light, which streamed upon him from an image of Mary, (1756.)

APPLICATION.—Let us cherish deep feelings of filial love to Mary in our hearts; let us try to spread devotion to her, and we also shall experience the effects of her power and maternal love.

COLLOQUY with St. Alphonsus. Congratulate him on the great good which he has effected, and which still proceeds through the indefatigable zeal of his disciples. Beg of him to obtain for us a share in his courage, zeal, charity, and fervent devotion to the Queen of Heaven.

PARABLE OF THE TARES AND WHEAT

1st Prel. Behold Jesus Christ giving and explaining this parable.

2d Prel. Beg the grace of really understanding its meaning, and of profiting by it.

POINT I

GENERAL APPLICATION OF THE PARABLE

CONSIDERATION.—"The kingdom of heaven (the Church) is likened to a man that sowed good seed in his field. But while men were asleep, his enemy came and oversowed cockle among the wheat, and went his way. And when the blade was sprung up, and had brought forth fruit, there appeared also the cockle. And the servants said to him, Wilt thou that we go and gather it up? And he said, No; lest perhaps gathering up the cockle, you root up the wheat also together with it. Suffer both to grow until the harvest, and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather up first the cockle, and bind it into bundles to burn; but the wheat gather ye into my barn." (St. Matt. 13: 24-26, 28-30.)

APPLICATION.—After having attentively considered the parable, as it came from the lips of our Divine Lord, meditate on the explanation of it, which, at the request of the Apostles, He deigned to give. "He that soweth the good seed," said He, "is the Son of Man; and the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom, and the cockle are the children of the wicked one, and the enemy that sowed them is the devil. But the harvest is the end of the world, and the reapers are the angels. The Son of Man shall send the angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all scandals and them that work iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Then shall the just shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." (St. Matt. 13: 37-39, 41-43.) These latter words were frequently used by our Lord to excite and fix the attention of His hearers.

AFFECTIONS.— Pray for grace to know and distrust yourself, for generosity of heart and final perseverance.

RESOLUTIONS.— To guard against the depraved spirit of the world, and the suggestions of the devil.

POINT II

PARTICULAR APPLICATION OF THE PARABLE

CONSIDERATION.— We may also understand by the field in which the good and bad seed grew together any religious community, however small it may be. The wheat, or good seed, represents those fervent religious, who, filled with the spirit of their vocation, are always advancing in virtue until they attain perfection; the cockle, or bad seed, denotes the lukewarm religious, too often mixed up with the good seed even in the holiest communities, all those who, by their singular and difficult character, are a trouble to others and cause them suffering, or who, by their irregularity and their evil influence, prevent the good from growing in virtue, or even draw the weak into disorder.

APPLICATION.— Many practical reflections present themselves to the mind. First, if you have to watch or govern others, take care not to shut your eyes to faults or the beginnings of irregularity, under the pretext that they are not great faults. Evil, like the cockle, is always growing, and it becomes difficult to root it up. Secondly, if you are responsible only for yourself, and unhappily you see that some of your brethren more or less resemble those whose sad pic-

ture has been just traced, do all you can to make them better, but do not be filled with an impetuous and bitter zeal, begging God that He would deliver you from them. As long as it pleases Him to keep them, they can greatly help on your spiritual progress by trying your patience, charity, and zeal. And then there is always a hope that they may see their faults, and become models of penance and fervor. Thirdly, look into yourself, and beg of God to give you light; examine carefully your manner of behaving to others, and see if, in some respects, you are not the cockle about which you are so impatient and unmerciful. Alas! those words of our Lord, "Why seest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, and seest not the beam that is in thy own eye," is but too often verified, so terribly does self-love blind us about ourselves. See, after these reflections, what there is to reform in your judgments of others, or your own conduct, and make resolutions accordingly.

COLLOQUY with the Lord our God, our true Father

FEAST OF ST. DOMINIC,

FOUNDER OF FRIARS PREACHERS *

1st Prel. Behold the Saint praying before he went to preach the word of God.

2d Prel. Beg the grace of following in the Saint's footsteps.

POINT I

ST. DOMINIC A MODEL OF DISINTERESTEDNESS, AND
ABNEGATION

CONSIDERATION.—Dominic was born of a rich and illustrious family of Castile, and was gifted with great eloquence. At an early age, he was called to the priesthood, and his preaching was very popular among his fellow-citizens. But God called him to a greater apostolate—that of converting the obstinate heretics of Languedoc, of evangelizing many countries, and of perpetuating his work by a new religious order. He obeyed the voice of God, and broke all the ties which bound him to earth—possessions, honors, and family. He clothed himself in a poor garment, often went bare-foot, lived on alms, and strove to die entirely to himself by a continual abnegation, and to live for God only. Then he gathered companions round him, whom he inspired with the same feelings of disinterestedness, abnegation, and zeal.

APPLICATION.—By following this line of conduct, Dominic became “homo Dei,” “a man of God;” a man powerful in word and work, and the founder of an order which has rendered great service to religion and given the Church many saints and illustrious theologians. By following the same line of conduct, by detaching ourselves entirely from all earthly things

* Born, 1170; first superior-general of the order, approved by Honorius III., 1216; first master of the sacred palace, 1217; died, 1221; canonized by Gregory XVIII., 1234.

and from ourselves, by perfect abnegation, we shall be able to follow the impulses of grace, and to labor successfully in our Lord's vineyard. Have we done this? After having generously given up all things, have we taken any thing back?

AFFECTIONS.—Desire and pray that we may die daily more and more to the world and to ourselves.

RESOLUTIONS.—To reflect frequently on these words of Christ, "If any man will follow Me, let him renounce himself."

POINT II

ST. DOMINIC A MODEL OF PENANCE AND OF MORTIFICATION

CONSIDERATION.—It is not enough for a preacher of the Gospel to renounce the possessions of this world, the esteem of men and of himself; we must also, as St. Paul says, bear the marks of the Lord Jesus in our body — always bearing about in our body the mortification of Jesus. St. Dominic understood this, and his mode of life was very austere; notwithstanding the great fatigue of his apostolate, he forbade himself the use of meat entirely, and made it a rule for his order; he fasted almost continually, and during the greater part of Lent he only took bread and water; he slept on a plank, often passed the night in prayer, and inflicted severe penances on his body.

APPLICATION.—If you can not go so far in the road of penance and mortification, you can at least mortify continually the disorderly appetites of the flesh; you can practice the penances which a wise director has permitted or counseled you; you can habitually mortify your eyes, your ears, your taste, and all your senses; you can, by an *entire* and *constant* fidelity to *all* the points of the rule and of religious discipline, live un-

der restraint, which is a continual penance. Have you done this? To animate yourself to it, think of the joy you will have at death at having done it, or of the sorrow if you have neglected it.

AFFECTIONS.—Beg of St. Dominic to obtain for you the spirit of penance and mortification.

RESOLUTIONS.—Frequently make a particular examination on the virtue of mortification.

POINT III

ST. DOMINIC A MODEL OF CHARITY AND GENTLENESS

CONSIDERATION.—Though St. Dominic was severe to himself, he was full of gentleness, goodness, and compassion for others, especially those who were drawn into the heresies of the Albigenses. They were cruel and fanatical schismatics, who used fire and sword against their opponents. Against them all efforts had been tried in vain, even the arms of the Crusaders. It was reserved for St. Dominic to win the glory of converting them by his gentleness and charity, by the unction of his words, and by his miracles, among which was the raising to life of three dead persons. But, nevertheless, the Saint drew his power chiefly from prayer, fasting, humility, confidence in God, and especially from his tender devotion to the Queen of Heaven. It was she who taught him that easy and successful way of honoring her Divine Son by the recital of the Rosary, which, owing to his zeal, became a universal practice.

COLLOQUY with St. Dominic.

PARABLES OF THE MUSTARD-SEED,

THE LEAVEN, AND THE HIDDEN TREASURE

- 1st Prel.* Imagine yourself to be among the people hearing Jesus.
2d Prel. Beg the grace of understanding the meaning of His words, and of drawing fruit from them.

POINT I

PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD-SEED

CONSIDERATION.—Let us ponder over three other parables which our Divine Master has deigned to give for our instruction and encouragement. The first is the grain of mustard-seed. “The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: which is the least indeed of all seeds: but when it is grown up, it is greater than all herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and dwell in the branches thereof.” (St. Matt. 13: 31, 32.) Our Lord foretold the marvelous increase of the Church. How little was she during the mortal life of Jesus Christ; how little on the day of Pentecost! It was an imperceptible seed; but made fruitful by the dew of grace, heated by the words of the Apostles, by the blood of martyrs, and the sweat of missionaries, it has become a majestic tree, which overshadows the whole earth. In its shade the kings of the earth and the princes of knowledge, who were prefigured by the birds of the air, come to seek that peace of heart and happiness which the world can not give them.

APPLICATION.—Is not this mustard-seed a figure also of the religious order to which you belong, and in which your days pass away peacefully and full of merit for eternity? Remember how feeble it was in

the beginning, and how it has extended and taken root, thanks to the holy lives and labors of those who laid its foundations. It is for you, now united in the same intention as your brethren, to strengthen and adorn the work of your predecessors. Each one can and ought to do his part, and that by an exact observance of the rule and constitutions, by prayer and good example. Have you thought of this?

AFFECTIONS.—Admiration, joy, gratitude, generous aspirations.

RESOLUTIONS.—To take to heart the interests of the order and the community of which you are a member; recommending them to God, to the Blessed Virgin, and to the Guardian Angels.

POINT II

PARABLE OF THE LEAVEN

CONSIDERATION.—"The kingdom of heaven is like to leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal until the whole was leavened." (St. Matt. 13: 33.) This parable can be applied to the precious Blood of Jesus Christ, which is given to us in Holy Communion as a sacred leaven. It enters within us, raises us above our weaknesses, gives supernatural strength to the three powers of our soul, and transforms us in a wonderful manner into Jesus Christ, according to the words, "*Qui manducat meam carnem, in me manet, et ego in illo.*" "He that drinketh My blood abideth in Me, and I in him." (St. John 6: 57.)

APPLICATION.—Take great care in preparing yourselves well to receive within your breast this heavenly leaven. What wonders it will work in you! It will give you a supernatural strength; it will make you invincible; it will make you men after the heart of God — spiritual and heavenly.

AFFECTIONS.—Regret for the repeated faults of which you have been guilty in receiving Holy Communion. Ask pardon for them.

POINT III

PARABLE OF THE HIDDEN TREASURE

CONSIDERATION.—"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hidden in a field; which a man having found, hid it, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field." (St. Matt. 13: 44.) The religious can easily perceive the meaning of this parable; he knows at once that the hidden treasure of which Jesus Christ speaks is Christian perfection, concealed from the eyes of the world in the religious state, and that he is the happy mortal who has taken possession of this wonderful treasure.

APPLICATION.—Recall the joy that filled your soul when you were given the definite possession of the treasure which you had found, of pronouncing the vows of religion. This remembrance will often be very useful to you, especially if it happens that you are tempted against your vocation, or experience a certain natural disgust for the labors or the office which is assigned you.

COLLOQUY with your holy patron of the month or else with your Guardian Angel.

PARABLES OF THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE,

THE NET, AND THE HOUSEHOLDER *

The Preludes as in the preceding Meditation.

POINT I

PARABLE OF THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE

CONSIDERATION.—“The kingdom of heaven,” said our Lord, “is like to a merchant seeking good pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went his way, and sold all that he had, and bought it.” (St. Matt. 13:45, 46.) By *pearls* our Divine Lord meant those virtues with which the soul should be adorned for the coming of her Spouse. All are precious, more precious than the purest gold and silver. But there is one which excels all others, and it is charity, the queen of virtues. To her belongs the kingdom of heaven; and our glory will be proportioned to the degree of our charity.

APPLICATION.—We have not had to seek for this pearl above all price, for it was given to us in Holy Baptism. But we can lose it; and the devil—who was the first to lose it, and with it heaven—has sworn to snatch it from us. Rage and envy are continually suggesting to him new methods of taking us by surprise. We ought, then, to be very prudent, and distrustful of ourselves. Are we so? We can also embellish this pearl, we can grow in charity. We have no lack of means for doing so. We know them, but how do we make use of them?

AFFECTIONS.—Rejoice in the Lord that you have entered religion, thereby placing in security the treasure of divine charity.

* If any one prefers to make a Meditation on the mystery of the day, *The Transfiguration*, it will be found as given for September 2d.

RESOLUTIONS.— To endeavor to increase this treasure within us.

POINT II

PARABLE OF THE NET CAST INTO THE SEA

CONSIDERATION.—"The kingdom of heaven is like, to a net cast into the sea, and gathering together of all kinds of fishes, which, when it is filled, they drew out, and sitting by the shore, they chose out the good into vessels, but the bad they cast forth. So shall it be at the end of the world. The angels shall go out, and shall separate the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire." (St. Matt. 13: 47-50.) This net means, of course, the Church, which, being spread over the whole world, receives and contains within her bosom the just and sinners, the elect and the condemned.

APPLICATION.— You may see also under the figure of the *net*, the order or institute to which you belong. Many subjects enter it, and form a large body, but are all good who belong to it? Are they what they ought to be by virtue of their vows, and the strict obligations they have contracted? Alas! among them can be found the wicked and hypocrites. But the day of manifestation and of separation will come for them as for all impenitent sinners; how terrible, then, will be their shame and their eternal despair!

AFFECTIONS.— Horror and fear of all pretense and dissimulation. Ask of God that He may deign to enlighten us.

RESOLUTIONS.— Frequently ask yourself: How do I stand in the sight of God with regard to the state of my conscience and my mode of life?

POINT III

PARABLE OF THE HOUSEHOLDER

CONSIDERATION.—Our Lord asked His disciples, "Have ye understood all these things? They say to Him, Yes." Then, desiring to make them understand by another parable the use they ought to make of the treasures of light with which He was enriching them, He added, "Therefore every scribe instructed in the kingdom of heaven is like to a man that is a householder, who bringeth forth out of his treasure new things and old," (St. Matt. 13: 51, 52;) and he gives them to his children according to their needs.

APPLICATION.—This is a command to those who have to instruct, it matters not what class of persons, not to content themselves with repeating precisely the same things, but to study constantly either to acquire fresh knowledge, or to be able to set forth the truths unchangeable in their nature under new, more attractive, and striking forms, or to find new methods of exciting and keeping up emulation among young people if we are called upon to direct them. How do you act? with what perseverance and success?

COLLOQUY with the three Apostles, St. Peter, St. James, and St. John, who had the happiness of witnessing the glory of our Lord on Mount Thabor in His miraculous Transfiguration, of which the Festival is celebrated this day.

JESUS ADMIRER

BUT ILL-TREATED IN HIS COUNTRY

1st Prel. Behold Jesus speaking to His fellow-citizens in the synagogue of Nazareth.

2d Prel. Beg for grace to draw great fruit from this Meditation.

POINT I

JESUS ADMIRER AT NAZARETH

CONSIDERATION.—After having given the parables we have been meditating on, Jesus, says the Evangelist, “came to Nazareth, where He was brought up. And when the sabbath was come, He began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing Him were in admiration at His doctrine, saying, How came this man by all these things? and what wisdom is this that is given to Him, and such mighty works as are wrought by His hands?” (St. Luke 4: 16; St. Mark 6: 2.)

APPLICATION.—Why did our Lord, after an absence of two years, spend some days at Nazareth? Did He wish to enjoy rest in the midst of acquaintances and friends, or to gain their applause? No; it was to give them a mark of His affection, to do them service, and to sanctify them. We learn from this that we are not forbidden to love our country, our countrymen, or our friends, or even to visit them, in the exercise of our ministry; but that it should be always done in a way worthy of a religious, so as to edify them, to glorify God, to do good to souls; never for motives of sensuality or vanity. What has been your way of thinking and acting in this matter?

AFFECTIONS.—Teach me, O Jesus! to seek always and in all things only Thy greater glory, and the salvation of my soul.

RESOLUTIONS.—To love your country and family in God, for God, and according to His will.

POINT II

JESUS DESPISED AT NAZARETH

CONSIDERATION.—The Nazarenes began by receiving our Lord well; but their feelings soon changed to jealousy. They thought that His great renown threw them into the shade. Envy led them to despise Him. Then they took scandal, and ended in disbelief. “Is not this the carpenter’s * son? Is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joseph, and Simon, and Jude? . . . Whence therefore hath he all these things? And they were scandalized in his regard.” (St. Matt. 13:55–57.) As if He had usurped the title of teacher in Israel, or because His family were lowly, they needed not to believe in Him.

APPLICATION.—Here we have an example of the fatal effects of envy. The envious can not bear to see others above them in learning, in merit, in success, or credit with others, especially if they are inferior to them in birth or younger in age. They are ingenious in finding out their faults, either real or imaginary; and very often they make out that the good they do and the praise they receive is a crime. We see this hideous passion of envy very plainly in the Nazarenes. We blame them for it; but let us search the depths of our own hearts, question our own conduct without hiding anything from ourselves, and we shall probably find enough to make us blush for ourselves, enough to make us dread for ourselves the consequences of envy.

AFFECTIONS.—Beg of God to preserve us from the delusions of envy.

RESOLUTIONS.—To guard against the earliest approaches of this passion.

* The word in the text is *fabri*, which signifies *artisan* or *workman*. It is usually translated *carpenter*.

POINT III

JESUS ILL-TREATED AT NAZARETH

CONSIDERATION.— The Nazarenes, thinking Jesus to be like other men, expected that His answer to their reproach for His humble birth would have been to work many miracles among them; but they were unworthy of such a favor, and our Lord told them so in these words: "Doubtless you will say to Me this similitude, Physician, heal thyself; as great things as we have heard done in Capharnaum, do also here in thy own country. And He said, Amen, I say to you, That no prophet is accepted in his own country." And, says St. Luke, "All they in the synagogue, hearing these things, were filled with anger. And they rose up, and thrust Him out of the city; and they brought Him to the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast Him down headlong." (St. Luke 4: 23, 24, 28, 29.)

APPLICATION.— We see to what terrible lengths uncontrolled passions can lead us. Let us look into ourselves, and see if there be any dangerous passion which we are hiding from ourselves; and, profiting by the proverb quoted by our Lord, "Physician, heal thyself," let us strive earnestly to fight against it. God will help us, and we shall soon subdue it.

COLLOQUY with your good angel.

MISSION OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES

1st Prel. Behold Jesus surrounded by His twelve Apostles at the moment when He sends them to preach in different parts of Galilee.

2d Prel. Beg the grace of really understanding the conduct of our Lord in this action.

POINT I

MISSION OF THE APOSTLES

CONSIDERATION.—Our Lord left Nazareth by a miracle, chained down the arms which were raised against Him, and went to teach in the surrounding country. “And seeing the multitudes, He had compassion on them,” says the Evangelist, “because they were distressed, and lying like sheep that have no shepherd. Then He saith to His disciples, The harvest indeed is great, but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He send forth laborers into His harvest.” (St. Matt. 9:36–38.) Having thus inflamed their zeal, He put them to the trial, sending them forth two and two, in diverse directions, to preach the *kingdom of God* to those who could not come to hear it for themselves.

APPLICATION.—Let us take notice of our Lord's conduct toward His disciples; it has formed the rule of all founders of religious orders. First He prepared them for the apostolic life by forming them to solid virtues, and inflaming them with zeal; then he teaches them how to practice it by His words and example. It is like a first novitiate; He made them follow a second one by giving them an easy mission; and He took care they should go two together, thus establishing that wise rule of a comparison, so that each may be to the other a sort of angel guardian, a counsel in doubt, and a support in trouble. Do you

value as you ought this plan of action, so well adapted to our nature and our weakness?

AFFECTIONS.—Return thanks to God that you have in this manner been gently and effectually trained to virtue and the practice of works of charity.

RESOLUTIONS.—Always choose to have a companion as witness of your conduct.

POINT II

POWERS AND INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN TO THE APOSTLES

CONSIDERATION.—Before the Apostles set forth, Jesus, says St. Luke, “gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases.” Then He gave them His instructions, “Take nothing for your journey, neither staff nor scrip, nor bread nor money; neither have two coats,” (St. Luke 9: 1–3;) “for the workman is worthy of his meat. Freely ye have received, freely give. And into whatsoever town or city you enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and there abide till you go thence. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, going forth out of that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet for a testimony to them.” (St. Matt. 10: 10, 11, 14, 18.)

APPLICATION.—We learn from this, what the spirit is which He wishes His missionaries to be filled with—the spirit of confidence in Him, who always proportions His commands to the means for executing them; the spirit of entire disinterestedness; the spirit of perfect trust in Providence, who will never let really disinterested laborers want any of the necessities of life; the spirit of mortification and indifference, which is contented with the hospitality provided by Providence, and does not desire to gratify any sensuality or vanity; finally, the spirit of gentleness toward

the ungrateful and obstinate. Such is the spirit which should animate us. Are we possessed by it? What efforts do we make to perfect it in us?

AFFECTIONS.—Return thanks to Jesus, who has Himself instructed us with regard to the virtues which we must practice in order to please Him.

RESOLUTIONS.—To strive to acquire these virtues, and attain perfection in them.

POINT III

SUCCESS AND RETURN OF THE APOSTLES

CONSIDERATION.—"And going out, they went about through the towns, preaching the gospel, and healing everywhere. And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them. And the Apostles, coming together unto Jesus, related to Him all things that they had done and taught; and He said to them, Come apart into a desert place and rest a little." (St. Luke 9:6; St. Mark 6: 13, 30, 31.)

APPLICATION.—Here, again, are beautiful instructions for the religious who has to spend a longer or shorter time out of the community, whether it be in the exercise of his sacred ministry, or upon business, or to nurse the sick, or for any other reason. On their return, they should faithfully observe two things; first, they should give their superior an *exact* account of all that they have done, and of all that has happened to them; then they should follow our Lord's counsel, recollect themselves, and renew their fervor by retirement and prayer. How have you done both these things?

COLLOQUY with Jesus Christ, our Divine Master and Model.

JESUS STRENGTHENS THE APOSTLES

AGAINST PERSECUTIONS

1st Prel. Behold Jesus in the midst of the twelve Apostles, who have returned from their mission.

2d Prel. Beg for the heart of a true Apostle of Jesus Christ.

POINT I

BY OUR LORD'S PREDICTIONS

CONSIDERATION.— During the weeks that the Apostles spent in their mission, they had met neither with contradictions nor ill-treatment. They might have thought it would be so always, and this would have been a fatal error. Therefore their Divine Master undeceived them by predicting that the great mission which should hereafter be given to them would be a very different one, and that their position in the midst of pagan nations would be like that of sheep without defense against wolves. “Behold, I send you as sheep in the midst of wolves.” (St. Matt. 10: 16.) What an image! What an idea it must have given the Apostles of the terrible battles they would have to undergo!

APPLICATION.— The forewarning of these trials greatly strengthened the faith and courage of the Apostles and first Christians in the future; nothing surprised or overcame them. And we, who are disciples and apostles of Jesus Christ, should remember that crosses of all kinds are to be our portion in this world, and that when they fall on us, we should be neither astonished nor cast down. We ought to be more surprised that we are not called to bear harder trials, to fight greater battles more worthy of a soldier of Jesus Christ. Have you thought and reasoned thus?

AFFECTIONS.—Pray that you may esteem and love all suffering endured for the name of Jesus.

RESOLUTIONS.—Imagine, each morning that you will have to overcome great difficulties during that day. Through this practice, a certain pious superior attained peace of mind, as any reverses with which he had to contend appeared more trifling than those which he had anticipated.

POINT II

BY THE MARTYRDOM OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

CONSIDERATION.—The martyrdom of St. John the Baptist, which took place during the Apostles' mission, served to confirm the idea that our Lord had given them of the fate which awaited them. The life of the holy precursor had been a continual apostolate, distinguished by the purest and most disinterested zeal that could be imagined. The Apostles had witnessed this; they had heard him praised by our Lord: and now they knew that John had fallen a victim to his zeal; that Herod had sacrificed him to the vengeance of a shameless woman; that after he had been kept a year and a half in chains, he had been beheaded, while their Divine Master made no opposition. It was sufficient to make them understand what He had said to them before, "Blessed are those who suffer persecution, because theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

APPLICATION.—While we remember the glorious martyrdom of St. John the Baptist, we should renew the resolution of braving the fear of men in the zealous accomplishment of our duties. Let us give ourselves up again without reserve into the hands of God, and He will draw good out of the evil they may do us. The cruel suffering inflicted on St. John won for him the martyr's crown and the glory of being the pre-

cursor of the Messiah in Limbo, as he had been on earth.

AFFECTIONS.—An ardent desire to die a martyr to zeal.

RESOLUTIONS.—In the accomplishment of our obligations, to have no other object than the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

POINT III

BY THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF

CONSIDERATION.—Let us now consider the encouragements that Jesus gave His disciples. He assures them that “the very hairs of your head are all numbered,” (St. Matt. 10: 30;) that men can kill the body only; and that he that loseth his life for God shall find it again glorified in heaven. But more than all else was the encouragement of His own example. “If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.” (St. John 15: 20.) “The disciple is not above the master, nor the servant above his lord.” (St. Matt. 10: 24.) What greater encouragement could our Lord give to His Apostles, and to ourselves especially, when this likeness between the servant and his lord is to extend to the next world, as He assures us in another place: “And I dispose to you, as My Father hath disposed to Me, a kingdom”! (St. Luke 22: 29.) If we have these consoling thoughts always before our minds, far from flying from crosses, says the author of the *Imitation*, we shall desire them.

COLLOQUY with Jesus, our Lord and Model.

IN THE SPIRIT WHICH SHOULD ANIMATE

US IN THE EXERCISE OF OUR ZEAL

1st Prel. Imagine you hear the Apostle saying, God "hath made us fit ministers of the New Testament, not in the letter, but in the spirit." (II. Cor. 3:6.)

2d Prel. Beg the grace of acquiring a high degree of the spirit which should animate our zeal.

POINT I

THE SPIRIT OF POVERTY AND HUMILITY

CONSIDERATION.— In the preceding Meditation, we found wonderful encouragements for the exercise of zeal. Let us try now to understand well what is the spirit that should animate our zeal and render it fruitful. It is no other than the spirit of our vocation. The more we excel in it, the more successful and pleasing to God will our zeal be. The first thing necessary for a religious is the spirit of poverty, of an entire detachment from the world and from himself. This should be also the spirit of an apostolic man. "Freely ye have received," says Jesus Christ, "freely give." (St. Matt. 10:8.) Men desire that in laboring for them we should act only from supernatural motives, and have nothing but the good of their souls in view. If they believe only that we are guided or influenced by vainglory, this will withdraw their confidence and separate them from us; how much more, if we justify their suspicions!

APPLICATION.— When you are nursing the sick, have you a temporal advantage chiefly in view? Have worldly calculations any weight with you in exercising your sacred ministry? Is it not entirely or partly vain-glory, rather than the glory of God, which stimulates you in study, in teaching, in preaching? Be persuaded

that it is thus if it pains you when others succeed better than yourself; or when you are employed in matters the world thinks little of, or when you are passed by unnoticed, etc. This matter is worthy of a serious examination, and the more so because self-love is apt to take us by surprise in it, and should therefore be feared.

AFFECTIONS.—Ask the grace to be always able to say with perfect truth: In the practice of charity, in study, in teaching, and in the care of the sick, I seek only God, and the good of souls.

RESOLUTIONS.—Frequently to renew this good intention.

POINT II

THE SPIRIT OF OBEDIENCE AND INDIFFERENCE

CONSIDERATION.—As religious, we ought not only to be detached from the world and its vanities, but also from our own will; we should try to excel in the spirit of obedience. This is the spirit which should distinguish an apostolic man. Our mission comes to us from God through our superior; it is He who has to assign to us the portion of the vineyard which He wishes us to cultivate; it is He who says, "Ite in vineam meam." You will go thither; you will do this; and you do it in such a manner. The religious who rebels against this order of things, and does what he pleases, deprives himself of an especial help from Providence, and of all consolation in adversity; he runs the risk of laboring without success and without much merit.

APPLICATION.—Will not all these grievous consequences follow you if you deceive your superiors, or if you morally force them in their arrangements for works of zeal? Can you then say confidently, "I am doing the work that God has given to me under obedi-

ence, and I am doing it in the way that He wishes I should do it"? Oh! how many there will be some day, who will repent of having been victims of these sad delusions! Act in such a way that you may not be among the number.

AFFECTIONS.— Pray that you may attain perfect and holy indifference.

RESOLUTIONS.— To act with perfect sincerity and simplicity in those cases in which you are permitted to give reasons for desiring to be employed in any particular work of charity or zeal rather than in others.

POINT III

THE SPIRIT OF MORTIFICATION AND SACRIFICE

CONSIDERATION.— As religious we ought to excel also in the spirit of mortification and sacrifice; and the exercise of zeal requires it. Great patience, courage, and generosity are necessary in the case of sick people, teaching classes, general surveillance, and all that education demands, and also in assiduity by day and night in the confessional, preaching, and direction of souls.

APPLICATION.— Happy is the religious who from his novitiate devotes himself to the acquisition of the spirit of mortification! His zeal will be ardent, ingenious, persevering, and even heroic if need be. How many souls he will save! Miserable, on the other hand, is he who has not learnt to mortify himself and sacrifice himself; his zeal will be weak and languishing; and there is great fear that many souls will perish eternally from his fault. Which of these religious do you resemble?

COLLOQUY with the great and zealous missionary, St. Francis Xavier.

CONTINUATION OF THE PRECEDING SUBJECT

The Preludes as in the preceding Meditation.

POINT I

THE SPIRIT OF PURITY AND SANCTITY

CONSIDERATION.—The end of this Meditation, like the preceding one, is to convince us that the more we excel in the spirit of our holy vocation, we shall excel in zeal, because it is that spirit which attaches to it success. This thought ought to stimulate us to attain it in perfection. The state of grace, purity of conscience, sanctity, is what our vocation demands from us; and by the spirit of purity we shall please God. "Be clean." (Is. 1: 16.) "Be holy, because I am holy." (Lev. 11: 44.) And also, by avoiding sin, by being always united to God by sanctifying grace or charity, we shall draw God's blessing down on our works of zeal, and may hope to see them fully succeed, and produce abundant and lasting fruit. Our Lord assures us of it: "He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit." (St. John 15: 5.) On the other hand, the Apostle cries out, "If I have not charity, I am become as sounding brass." (1. Cor. 13: 1.) I may raise my voice, I may entertain my audience; but I shall not convert any one.

APPLICATION.—If, then, you wish that your zeal should be blessed by God, you ought not only to keep yourself in the state of grace, you ought also to strive after great purity of conscience and sanctity. What efforts are you making to attain this end? What horror have you of the slightest fault? What means do you take to avoid them? With what earnestness do you purify yourself in the Sacrament of Penance?

AFFECTIONS.—An ardent desire to attain increased purity of conscience.

RESOLUTIONS.—Vigorously to employ the means calculated to accomplish this desire.*

POINT II

THE SPIRIT OF CHARITY AND GENTLENESS

CONSIDERATION.—A tender and compassionate charity, together with great meekness, the fruit of humility, is certainly the spirit of our Divine Master and Model. “Love one another, as I have loved you.” (St. John 13:34.) And again, “Learn of Me; because I am meek and humble of heart.” (St. Matt. 11:29.) Such is the spirit which should distinguish those who profess to follow closely in the footsteps of Jesus, and especially those who profess to follow Him in the path of zeal. He desires that our charity should be absolutely free from all rancor or revenge: “Do good to them that hate you; pray for them that persecute and calumniate you.” He desires that our meekness should be without disguise, like that of sheep and doves: “I send you as sheep among wolves.” “Be simple as doves.” By following these precepts of our Lord and His wonderful example, the Apostles and their successors converted the world and changed wolves into lambs.

APPLICATION.—By charity and gentleness we shall succeed in the efforts we make for the conversion and sanctification of souls. The ardor of our zeal must be tempered by charity, patience, and gentleness. Rudeness and harshness of speech exasperate people and close their hearts against us; charity and gentleness open their hearts, and give us the mastery over them. Has not experience taught you this?

AFFECTIONS.—Ask pardon for the injury you have

inflicted on yourself and others by giving way to impatience, bad temper, and anger.

RESOLUTIONS.—Never to utter a reprimand until you and the person to be reproved have recovered calmness.

POINT III

THE SPIRIT OF PIETY AND PRAYER

CONSIDERATION.—Without a tender and solid piety, without the habit and spirit of prayer, we shall never be religious, save in name; we shall be incapable of that virtue which both God and man demand from us. Still more shall we be incapable of producing fruit in souls. The success of our zeal must come from God: without grace our efforts will be useless. “Neither he that planteth is any thing, nor he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.” (1. Cor. 3:7.)

APPLICATION.—You complain that your zealous efforts only meet with indifference and insensibility; but is not the fault your own? “Sanguine emendæ sunt animæ.” Souls are gained, say the saints, at the price of blood, because the blood of God has flowed for them. What extraordinary means do you use? How many mortifications and penances; how many prayers and novenas, do you offer for this intention? Perhaps you are contented with purely human means, and therefore what success can you expect? Be a man of God — “homo Dei” — a man of prayer and mortification, and all will yield to your zeal.

COLLOQUY with our Lord. Pray earnestly for an increase of the spirit of piety, that you may become truly zealous.

FEAST OF ST. CLARE,

FOUNDESS OF THE ORDER OF POOR CLARES *

1st Prel. Behold the Saint in glory, surrounded by a vast number of children whom she has led to heaven.

2d Prel. Beg of her to obtain for you the spirit of your holy vocation.

POINT I

ST. CLARE'S SPIRIT OF GENEROSITY

CONSIDERATION.—God called Clare to spread and perpetuate among women the spirit and austere rule of St. Francis, her fellow-citizen. Her parents, who were of the highest rank in Assisi, wished to keep her in the world; but the Saint, at the age of eighteen, fled from her father's house, had her long hair cut off, and was clothed in the habit of penance by St. Francis in the convent of the Portiuncula. God rewarded this great generosity: He sent Clare a great number of companions, who formed the nucleus of the new order of which she was elected first Abbess, (1212.) After the example of their foundress, they all practiced austerities till then unknown among women: they went barefoot, slept on boards, kept perpetual abstinence, fasted a great part of the year, abstaining then even from milk, eggs, and fish; they wore a rough hair-shirt, and rose in the night to chant the Divine Office together. The Saint found means of practicing still greater severities.†

APPLICATION.—Of what is not generosity capable? It knows neither obstacles nor impossibilities. How

* Born, 1193; died, 1253; canonized, 1255.

† It is an astonishing thing that, after six centuries have gone by, we see the daughters of St. Clare living in a number of towns and persevering even in our days in all these austerities, in spite of the weak health and the prejudices that now exist.

mortified we should be, and what great progress we should make in virtue, if we were animated by it as St. Clare was!

AFFECTIONS.— Beg earnestly of the Saint to obtain for you this virtue.

RESOLUTIONS.— Examine yourself as to the particular point on which you are wanting in generosity, and make resolutions accordingly.

POINT II

ST. CLARE'S SPIRIT OF POVERTY

CONSIDERATION.— St. Clare's esteem for poverty was astonishing. She chose for herself the worst and meanest things in the house; she laid down in her Constitutions that the life was to be a common one; that no sister — not even the superioress — was to possess any thing of her own; and that the community were to have no endowments, but always to subsist by their labor and the alms of the faithful. She firmly resisted the Popes Gregory IX. and Innocent IV., who wished her houses to have fixed revenues like those of other religious.* When people said her poverty was exaggerated, she replied that Jesus Christ had understood and practiced it in this manner, and that, if observed in this way, it would preserve her convents from relaxation, a worldly spirit, divisions, and views of personal interest.

APPLICATION.— Take into serious consideration the motives that the Saint gave for her great esteem of evangelical poverty, and you will esteem and love it as she did; and, far from finding its observances too

* Later on, some of these houses accepted endowments with the permission of Pope Urban IV. They were henceforth called Urbanists, or *rich Clares*. They have never prospered as the *poor Clares* have done.

severe, you will continue to preserve it by your example, and to transmit it intact to those who come after you. How far have you contributed to this up to the present time?

AFFECTIONS.— Pray for the love and the spirit of evangelical poverty.

RESOLUTIONS.— After the example of Saint Clare, I will animate myself to the practice of poverty by meditating on the privations and sufferings of the life of Jesus.

POINT III

ST. CLARE'S SPIRIT OF PIETY

CONSIDERATION.— St. Clare found consolation and strength in religious duties, in frequent communion, and in mental and vocal prayer, to which she gave a great part of the night. By her prayers she miraculously preserved her convent from the invasion of the Saracens, and the town of Assisi from great misery. She was so humble and grateful that she looked on herself as a debtor to her fellow-citizens, from whom she and her community received their daily subsistence. She made it a rule to pray much for them.

APPLICATION.— We should also pray much for our benefactors, and try to make people of the world understand how much they owe to those holy beings who, hidden in their cloisters, raise their suppliant hands to heaven for them, and turn aside the punishment they have deserved by their sins.

COLLOQUY with St. Clare.

MIRACLE

OF THE MULTIPLICATION OF THE LOAVES

1st Prel. Behold the Apostles distributing the miraculous bread to the multitude.

2d Prel. Beg for redoubled love and devotion to Jesus Christ.

POINT I

OCCASION OF THE MIRACLE

CONSIDERATION.—The desert place where Jesus had led His Apostles on their return from their mission was soon besieged by an immense crowd of people. "Jesus had compassion on them, and from a rising ground, where He stood with the twelve, He spoke of *the kingdom of God*." The time went on, the day declined, and still the crowd remained motionless, hanging on the words of Jesus. The Apostles said to Him, "This is a desert place, and the hour is now past: send away the multitudes, that going into the towns they may buy themselves victuals. But Jesus said to them, They have no need to go; give you them to eat." (St. Matt. 14:15, 16.) It was evident that, in spite of their want of faith, He was about to work a miracle.

APPLICATION.—After the example of these good Israelites let us seek, according to our Lord's precept, "the kingdom of heaven and His justice" before all other things. Have we not to reproach ourselves with being more occupied with our bodily wants, our health and our comforts, than with the means of glorifying God, and of increasing in virtue and sanctity? Alas! many religious have to reproach themselves with it; and the knowledge of it causes their want of confidence in God when human means fail them. Have you not experienced this?

AFFECTIONS.—Acknowledgment of your faults, shame, regret, faith, and confidence.

RESOLUTIONS.—"Seek first the kingdom of God and His justice," in the certainty that "all things else," all things necessary for existence, will be granted unto you. Our Lord has promised it, and a number of miraculous incidents have since confirmed His words.

POINT II

GREATNESS OF THE MIRACLE

CONSIDERATION.—"Jesus said to Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? And this He said to try him: for He Himself knew what He would do. Philip answered Him, Two hundred penny-worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one may take a little. One of His disciples, Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, saith to Him, There is a boy here, that hath five barley loaves, and two fishes: but what are these among so many? Then Jesus said, Make the men sit down: . . . The men therefore sat down, in number about five thousand. And Jesus took the loaves; and when He had given thanks, He distributed to them that were set down; in like manner also of the fishes, as much as they would. And when they were filled, . . . they gathered up therefore, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves." (St. John 6: 5-13.)

APPLICATION.—Five thousand persons fed and satisfied with five loaves and two fishes; what a wonderful miracle! "Would that I could have witnessed it!" you say involuntarily. But, says St. Austin, (Tract 24, in *Joan.*,) you witness a similar one when you see that from some seeds sown in the ground every year God feeds millions of men.

AFFECTIONS.—Adore, bless, and praise the power and the mercy of the Lord your God.

RESOLUTIONS.—During meals, let us, like Jesus Christ, raise our eyes and our thoughts toward Him from whom we receive the food served to us, and beg of Him to bless it: "*Benedic, Domine, nos et hæc tua dona; quæ de tua largitate sumus sumpturi.*" After meals, let us give thanks from our hearts.

POINT III

EFFECTS OF THE MIRACLE

CONSIDERATION.—They were instantaneous; for all the people cried out, "This is of a truth the Prophet that is to come into the world!" (St. John 6: 14.) Strengthened in their faith, their love and devotion for our Lord increased; they wanted to "take Him by force and make Him a king;" but "Jesus fled again into the mountain Himself alone." (St. John 6: 15.)

APPLICATION.—When we visit Jesus Christ present on our altar, and especially when we receive Him in Holy Communion, of which the multiplication of the loaves was a type, let us imitate these pious Israelites, and reawaken in our hearts the feelings of love, faith, devotion, and gratitude, that Jesus loved so much to see in us.

COLLOQUY with the Blessed John Berchmanns, of the Society of Jesus, whose Festival, solemnized for the first time at St. Peter's, Rome, on the 28th of May, 1865, is celebrated this day. The numerous cures recently obtained through his intercession should animate our confidence and induce us to invoke him, and endeavor to spread devotion to him.

EVE OF THE ASSUMPTION

1st Prel. Behold the Apostles surrounding the death-bed of our Lady.

2d Prel. Pray for the grace of a happy and holy death.

It was the will of God that the humiliation of death should precede the glory of Mary's assumption, so that she might be made in all things like her Divine Son. Let us occupy our thoughts to-day, then, with her death. It was real, though exempted from all suffering.

POINT I

IT WAS FREE FROM REGRETS

CONSIDERATION.— St. Alphonsus tells us that it is generally three things which make death painful to us. The first is, attachment to earthly possessions. "O death!" says Ecclesiasticus, (41: 1,) "how bitter is the remembrance of thee to a man that hath peace in his possessions!" He has laid up these possessions with much labor for many years, and he is to be separated from them with bitter and useless regret. There was nothing of this with Mary. From the age of three years she made the sacrifice of parents, of friends, and of all the world could offer her, and all her affections were fixed on God. She had nothing to regret on earth. Her only desire was to leave it, that she might fly to heaven and be there eternally united to the only object of her love — Jesus.

APPLICATION.— By the vow of poverty, and by renouncing all the affections of flesh and blood, you have broken the ties which bind you to earth; you can leave it without sorrow or regret. If you are faithful to your vocation till the end, your death will be but an easy passage from earth to your home.

AFFECTIONS.—"Let my soul die the death of the just." (Num. 23: 10.)

RESOLUTIONS.—Having generously renounced all, beware of fixing your heart on trifles.

POINT II

IT WAS FREE FROM REMORSE

CONSIDERATION.—One of the most ordinary sufferings of death is the remorse which the heart of the dying person feels at the thought of his sins and of God's justice. But remorse could find no place in the heart of our Lady, the purest of creatures. In all her long life there had not been a shadow of sin, but an uninterrupted series of heroic acts of virtue, which seemed to say to her, "We are your works; we will not leave you alone; we will go with you to the throne of God, to add luster to your triumph."

APPLICATION.—Endeavor to efface the last traces of your past sins by penance; redouble your vigilance over yourself, that you may not commit them again; and then, far from experiencing remorse at the hour of death, you will be full of confidence and joy in the blessed expectation of an eternal reward.

AFFECTIONS.—"Wash me yet more from my iniquity." (Psalm 50: 4.)

RESOLUTIONS.—To offer to God, during morning prayer, the labors and crosses of the coming day, in the spirit of penance, and in expiation of our faults and infidelities.

POINT III

IT WAS FREE FROM FEAR

CONSIDERATION.—"Often," said St. Bernardine of Sienna, "when thinking of those words of the Holy Ghost, 'Man knoweth not whether he be worthy of

love or hatred,' I have trembled from head to foot, and been in a kind of agony." The uncertainty about eternal salvation is the third and the greatest thing which fills the dying with fear and anguish, and not without cause. But what reason for fear could the Mother of God have, who saw the throne of glory prepared for her in heaven by the side of her Divine Son? She longed, therefore, for the moment which should break the bonds that bound her to earth.

APPLICATION.— You have had no revelation about your salvation, and often doubts and fears harass and trouble your soul; but, on the other hand, what sure grounds of confidence you possess! First, the words of Jesus Christ, "Every one that hath left house, or lands, or brethren, for My name's sake, shall possess everlasting life." Then there is the saying of the Fathers, "A servant of Mary shall never perish." Expand your heart, then, with entire confidence; your Mother will give you an hundred-fold. She will assist you in your last moments, as she did visibly St. Stanislaus Kostka, who died saying that he saw our Lady coming to him.* To-day, then, the eve of the most solemn of her feasts, prepare yourself by holy affections and ardent desires to celebrate this feast worthily, so that you may obtain a large share in the favor which she delights to pour on her devoted children on the anniversary of her Coronation.

COLLOQUY with St. Stanislaus Kostka.

* This young saint, who, at eighteen, became a novice in the Society of Jesus, asked and obtained the grace of dying between the fourteenth and fifteenth of August, in order that he might assist in heaven at the triumph of her whom he always called his Mother.

FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION

OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

1st Prel. Behold Mary carried by angels to the highest heaven.
2d Prel. Beg the grace of worthily celebrating the great feast of to-day.

POINT I

RESURRECTION OF MARY

CONSIDERATION.—Our Lady's death had been a privileged one, and so was her resurrection. St. John Damascene relates it from tradition, and the revelations of St. Bridget confirm it. The Apostles were miraculously brought to Jerusalem at the time of our Lady's death, and they buried her body in Gethsemani, in a new sepulchre. St. Thomas arrived afterward, and at his entreaty the Apostles opened the grave, and found nothing there but the winding-sheet and lilies, from whence they concluded that Jesus, desiring not to tarry in glorifying His Mother, had raised her up, and brought her by angel hands to be associated in body and soul to Him in heavenly glory and felicity. The Church adopts this belief, although she has not made it an article of faith, by saying in the Mass for this day, "*Assumpta est Maria in cœlum,*" "*Mary is assumed into heaven.*" Let us rejoice in the glorious resurrection of our dearest Mother. Let us rejoice in union with the angels, with the Church, and with all her devout children. Let us rejoice, also, for ourselves, at the thought of our own joyful resurrection. It is true it will not immediately follow our death; but it is not less certain, and if we choose, it will not be less glorious.

AFFECTIONS.—Acts of faith in our future resurrection. "*Credo carnis resurrectionem.*" "*I believe in the resurrection of the body.*"

RESOLUTIONS.—I will strive to mortify my body with all its senses, knowing that the more I labor for that end, the more glorious and joyful will be its resurrection.

POINT II

ASSUMPTION OF MARY

CONSIDERATION.—"Assumpta est Maria in cœlum." "Mary is assumed into heaven." Let us hear and meditate on what St. Anselm and St. Bernard say of this great mystery. They tell us of the legions of angels who came down from heaven and bowed low before the Virgin Mother, then reverently raised her into the heavenly regions. They tell us that millions of the blessed in Paradise went before her, and cried out, astonished at her divine beauty, "*Quæ est ista, quæ ascendit de deserto, deliciis affluens?*" "Who is this that cometh up from the desert, flowing with delights?" They tell us that Mary triumphantly entered heaven, was received and conducted by her Divine Son to the throne of the Eternal Father, in the midst of the acclamations of angels and saints: "Hosanna, glory and honor to the daughter of David! Blessed be she that cometh to us like a queen, in the name of the Lord!"

APPLICATION.—The honors and joys of a mother are also those of her children. Let us, then, be filled with holy joy on this anniversary of the assumption of our beloved Mother, and of her glorious entrance into heaven; and let us remember that she was raised so high because she was the humblest of all creatures, and that she enjoys all this felicity because she was the *queen of martyrs*.

AFFECTIONS.—Admiration, joy, congratulations, ardent desires to follow in the footsteps of our Mother,

and thus attain a high degree of humility and mortification.

RESOLUTIONS.—In all bodily or mental suffering, to reflect on the joys and delights of heaven.

POINT III

CORONATION OF MARY

CONSIDERATION.—The coronation of Mary, as queen of heaven and earth, is the completion of the glorious mystery of this day. Try to gain an idea of it. Imagine you see the Virgin Mother at the feet of the Eternal Father, who places the crown on her head, the sceptre in her hand, and proclaims her queen of angels and of men, dispenser of His grace, mother of mercy. Fancy you hear the joyful cries of the inhabitants of heaven, Hosanna, glory and honor to our queen! Hail, holy queen, mother of mercy! Reign over us, thou and thy Divine Son!

APPLICATION.—Let us unite ourselves in heart and mind with the inhabitants of the Church triumphant; let us repeat with holy enthusiasm these same expressions of joy and jubilation, the same declarations of love and devotion. Then, reflecting that she is nearest to Jesus in glory because she followed Him the most closely on the day of His Passion, let us offer ourselves to bear our cross generously with Jesus, to carry it even to the heights of Calvary, and to die with Jesus on the cross.

COLLOQUY with the Blessed Virgin. Paraphrase the *Salve Regina*.

THE NIGHT THAT FOLLOWED

THE MIRACLE OF THE MULTIPLICATION OF THE
LOAVES.

1st Prel. Behold the Apostles struggling against the tempest on the sea of Galilee.

2d Prel. Beg for confidence in God, and perseverance under all the trials of life.

POINT I

THE GREAT FATIGUE OF THE APOSTLES

CONSIDERATION.—The day which was closed by the miracle of multiplying the loaves was a very fatiguing one for our Lord and His Apostles; from early morning till late at night they had not a minute's rest. And not even was night to bring it them. No sooner had the Apostles fed the five thousand guests and gathered the fragments of the repast than our Lord "immediately obliged His disciples," says the Evangelist, "to go up into the ship, that they might go before Him over the water to Bethsaida." He did this that they should not be influenced by the people who wanted to proclaim Him king of Israel. He himself "went up to the mountain to pray," (St. Mark 6: 45, 46;) and there, after that tiring day, He passed the night in vigil. The kind of life to which it has pleased God to call us requires much labor and constant fatigue. In truth, the rule tempers this very wisely; but how often it happens that in consequence of unforeseen circumstances, we must watch and labor at night after working hard all day! How does the lukewarm religious act then? He complains and murmurs, or at least tries to make up for it by idle condolence or human consolations. The humble and fervent religious, on the contrary, thinks he is only doing his

duty; that what he does is very little in comparison of what the saints have done, and what worldly people do for interest or for vanity. He delights in leaving one labor for another, and when necessary, his very exhaustion is the means of his finding fresh strength. Which of these two do you resemble?

AFFECTIONS.—Pray for the generous heart of a Saint Francis Xavier, who exclaimed, “Amplius, Domine, amplius.” “Yet more work, O Lord! yet more!”

RESOLUTIONS.—When distressed with work, I will derive courage from these words of St. Augustine, “If labor terrifies you, let the hope of reward be your encouragement.”

POINT II

THE PAINFUL NIGHT SPENT BY THE APOSTLES STRUGGLING AGAINST THE STORM

CONSIDERATION.—Though the Apostles had put to sea by the express orders of Jesus, they met with contrary winds. In vain did they try to coast along the shore till they reached the port of Bethsaida; they were always driven back. They continued then to struggle till after midnight, when “Mare autem, vento magno flante, exurgebat.” “The sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew,” (St. John 6: 18,) and the ship was tossed by the waves. What did our Lord do? He saw their fatigue and suffering. “Videns eos laborantes in remigando.” He saw them “laboring in rowing,” (St. Mark 6: 48,) and He watched over their safety. But He delayed coming visibly to their succor and causing the storm to cease. Why did He act thus? St. John Chrysostom tells us it was “to train them to increase their faith, humility, and confidence, and that they might have a keener sense of the blessing of divine help.”

APPLICATION.— Thus does God act toward us, and for the same ends. At times He allows that in fulfilling certain duties of our office, or in the execution of enterprises undertaken under obedience and with the best intentions, we should meet with contradictions and difficulties, or that we should not have immediate success. Often, also, He allows us to be troubled for a long time by mental sufferings or violent temptations, in spite of the means we employ and the prayers we offer up to be delivered. What ought we, then, to do? To take care not to give way to distrust or discouragement, as if God had forsaken us; to be convinced that He sees our sufferings and our labors; that He is near us and sustains us by His grace, and that He *does not ask from us success but fidelity*; and finally, that after having tried us, He will give us at the fitting time the peace and joy of His sensible presence. See whether in these matters you can amend your way of thinking or acting. Make your resolutions.

COLLOQUY with our Divine Master and Saviour. Offer Him your resolutions, and beg that He may enable you to accomplish them.

CONTINUATION OF THE PRECEDING SUBJECT

1st *Prel.* Behold St. Peter walking on the water to meet Jesus.
2d *Prel.* Beg the grace of increasing in the knowledge and love
of Jesus Christ.

POINT I

JESUS, WALKING ON THE WATER, GOES TOWARD THE BARK OF THE APOSTLES

CONSIDERATION.—When the hour fixed by the divine decree had come, which was to bring help to the Apostles, “about the fourth watch of the night,” just at daybreak, Jesus, says the Gospel, came to them; “*ambulans supra mare*,” “walking upon the sea.” (St. Mark 6:48.) They saw Him afar off, not clearly, the darkness of the night not being quite gone. “*Turbati sunt, dicentes, Quia phantasma est.*” They “were troubled, saying, It is an apparition.” (St. Matt. 14:26.)

APPLICATION.—The Apostles were under a great delusion in supposing that the person of Jesus Christ was an apparition; but are not our delusions, if not as great, at least more blamable, because they spring from our passions? Do we not sometimes take Jesus Christ, that is, the lights, the inspirations, the thoughts, or the salutary fear that comes to us from on high, for phantoms and fancies? On the other hand, do we not take the fancies of our imagination, the inordinate desires of our hearts, the longings of our pride, for inspirations? And taking Jesus Christ for a phantom, or a phantom for Jesus Christ, is equally insulting and blamable.

AFFECTIONS.—Pray for the gift of *discerning spirits*, that you may equally avoid the danger of being

seduced by the demon in the guise of an angel of light, and that of repulsing the angel of light as a demon of darkness.

RESOLUTIONS.— To act with candor and docility toward your spiritual director.

POINT II

JESUS COMFORTS HIS TERRIFIED APOSTLES

CONSIDERATION.— The human figure that the Apostles saw from afar, like an apparition walking on the water, drew nearer, and seemed coming toward them. They were terrified at the sight, and cried out; and immediately He spoke with them, and said to them, "Habete fiduciam; ego sum; nolite timere." "Be of good heart; it is I; fear ye not." (St. Matt. 14: 27.)

APPLICATION.— The Apostles were on the sea by the express command of Jesus; they had therefore a right to count on His help; and it did not fail them. Let us learn from this that in the works of zeal or charity laid on us by obedience, and in which we are exposed often to many temptations and dangers, we may always count on an especial assistance from God. This is very encouraging.

AFFECTIONS.— Let us beg of Jesus to say to us likewise in our fears and perils, Have courage; it is I; fear ye not: "Confidite; ego sum; nolite timere."

RESOLUTIONS.— To accept any position to which obedience may call us, without fear of failing in the task.

POINT III

JESUS PERMITS ST. PETER TO COME TO HIM, WALKING ON THE WATER

CONSIDERATION.— As soon as St. Peter heard the voice of his dearest Master, he said, as if beside him-

self, "Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come to Thee upon the water; and He said, Come. And Peter going down out of the boat, walked upon the water to come to Jesus. But seeing the wind strong, he was afraid; and when he began to sink, he cried out, saying, Lord, save me! And immediately Jesus, stretching forth His hand, took hold of him, and said to him, O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt? And when they were come up into the boat, the wind ceased," and presently the ship was at the land to which they were going. And adds St. Matthew, "They that were in the boat came and adored Him, saying, Indeed Thou art the Son of God." (St. Matt. 14: 28-33.)

APPLICATION.—This passage of Holy Scripture is full of practical instruction for us. We see the ardent love of St. Peter, impatient to be with his Divine Master again; we see his lively faith rewarded by a wonderful miracle; and then we see the astonishing inconstancy of that same faith, ready to defy all perils at one moment, and at the next failing because of a gust of wind; on the other hand, we see the wonderful goodness of Jesus Christ. He puts forth His hand to His disciple, and raises him up, while He says to him words which humble and encourage him at the same time, "O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt?" What faith have we, or what love?

COLLOQUY with our Lord. Prostrate yourself before Him and adore Him with the Apostles. Ask of Him an increase of faith and love.

FAITH OF THE GENESARENES:

MIRACULOUS CURES

1st Prel. Behold Jesus in the midst of sick people, who are trying to touch the hem of His garment.

2d Prel. Beg the grace of real admiration for their faith.

POINT I

THE PROMPT AND LIVELY FAITH OF THE GENESARENES

CONSIDERATION.— The boat which carried Jesus and His Apostles came ashore in the morning at the country of Genesar, or Genesareth. Already the fame of the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves wrought the day before had been spread around during the night by witnesses of it coming from the other side of the lake or sea of Galilee. As soon, therefore, as the Genesarenes, who were simple, truthful men, heard that Jesus had arrived, they ran to Him from all parts with a lively faith, and recognized Him as the great Prophet, the Ambassador of God, their Messiah. Every heart inclined toward Him; Jesus was as in the midst of His children.

APPLICATION.— If our faith was more ardent, our hearts, too, would incline also, and even fly toward Jesus the moment we enter the holy place where He dwells; when at the voice of the priest He comes down upon the altar; when, to pour His blessings on us, He comes out of His Tabernacle, shows Himself to us, unveils to us His heart burning with love, and says to us, "Come to Me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you." (St. Matt. 11: 28.)

AFFECTIONS.— Let us reanimate our faith; acknowledging, adoring, and loving a God so great, a Saviour so mighty, so merciful, and so beneficent.

RESOLUTIONS.—To reflect, when approaching the sanctuary, on the real presence of Jesus Christ; and on our entrance, to behold Him, with the eyes of faith, extending His arms and summoning us to Him.

POINT II

THE FAITH OF THE GENESARENES WAS AN ACTIVE AND CHARITABLE ONE

CONSIDERATION.—"Fides quæ per charitatem operatur." "Faith that worketh by charity," (Gal. 5:6,) says the Apostle. It manifested itself by charity among those of the good Genesarenes who first had the happiness of recognizing the Saviour. They were anxious that others should share their happiness, and, running through that whole country, they began to carry about in beds those who were sick.

APPLICATION.—This charity for the sick was very praiseworthy, and touched the compassionate heart of our Divine Lord. Ah! would that we had the same zeal for our brethren's salvation! would that we profited by all the occasions which so often present themselves, of making them think of their own souls, showing them their spiritual maladies, and persuading them to come to Him who can cure them! This would be charity indeed to them, and very meritorious for us; in future let it be thus.

AFFECTIONS.—Let us humble ourselves before God at finding that we are so insensible to the spiritual necessities of our neighbor; and pray for a great increase of faith, charity, and zeal.

RESOLUTIONS.—To consider how, where, and by what means we may render ourselves of service to our neighbor.

POINT III

THE FAITH OF THE GENESARENES WAS FULL OF
CONFIDENCE AND RESPECT

CONSIDERATION.—The faith of the Genesarenes was rewarded by a number of miraculous cures. St. Mark tells us, "Whithersoever He entered, into towns, or into villages or cities, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought Him that they might touch but the hem of His garment; and as many as touched Him were made whole." (St. Mark 6: 56.)

APPLICATION.—Let us remark the extreme goodness, condescension, and patience of the Saviour, our Divine Model. He suffers Himself to be approached, touched, and pressed upon by a crowd of sick people, blind, lame, and suffering from every kind of disease, who contended which should touch Him first and obtain relief; and He never complained; He showed neither emotion nor impatience. Try to form yourself on this admirable model. Remark, also, that the condition to which our Lord had this time attached a cure was the touching of His garment. Interpreters tell us that He did this to make us understand what signal graces and favors are attached to the immediate contact with His body in Holy Communion, of which He was going to speak that very same day in the synagogue of Capharnaum.

COLLOQUY with Jesus, the Divine Physician of our souls. Let us manifest to Him our spiritual maladies, and pray that we may be healed.

THE DISCOURSE OF JESUS

ABOUT THE FUTURE INSTITUTION OF THE EUCCHARIST

1st Prel. Behold Jesus teaching in the synagogue of Capharnaum.

2d Prel. Beg from Him a docile mind and devoted heart.

POINT I

REPROACH THAT JESUS ADDRESSED TO THE MEN OF CAPHARNAUM

CONSIDERATION.—Jesus, after having spent the whole day in traveling through the country of Genesar, curing the sick, came toward evening on the Sabbath to Capharnaum, and, without taking any rest, went to the synagogue. He found a numerous assembly there; the greater part of those who, on the day before, had been fed and satisfied with the miraculous bread. Their eagerness to see Jesus again, however praiseworthy in itself, had no merit, and was even worthy of blame, because they were only actuated by a purely material and sensual motive, as we learn from our Lord's reproof: "Amen, amen, I say to you; you seek Me, not because you have seen miracles, but because you did eat of the loaves, and were filled." (St. John 6: 26.)

APPLICATION.—Have you not often lost the merit of your good works from interested motives? Your *eager* willingness to go to a distance to fulfill some office of your sacred ministry, or to change your residence or office, for instance, was not the motive principally that the journey had attractions for you; or was it not from vainglory or hope of some earthly blessing? That you may judge correctly about it, examine whether you have the same eagerness about those things which flatter your pride or sensuality, as for those for which you have a repugnance.

AFFECTIONS.—Self-abasement, an ardent desire to die to yourself and to the world.

RESOLUTIONS.—To pay particular attention, during this day, to the motives which influence our actions.

POINT II

REVELATION WHICH OUR LORD MADE

CONSIDERATION.—Jesus, wishing gradually to prepare men's minds to believe the wonderful miracle of the Eucharist, took advantage of this earthly disposition of the people of Capharnaum to tell them of it. He said to them, "Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto life everlasting, which the Son of Man will give you. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. The bread that I will give is My flesh for the life of the world. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" And Jesus, far from denying the sense of the real presence, answered, "Amen, amen, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you; for My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me, and I in him. Your fathers did eat manna, and are dead. He that eateth this bread shall live forever." (St. John 6: 27, 51–54, 56, 57, 59.)

APPLICATION.—When we consider these wonderful words flowing from the lips, or rather the heart, of our loving Saviour, we are drawn to thank Him with our whole hearts — 1st, for having given us all that He could give us, in bestowing Himself to be the food of our souls; 2d, for having taught this extraordinary mystery in so clear and precise a manner that it is impossible to doubt it; 3d, for having allowed us to

be born in the bosom of the Catholic Church, where we have so often had the happiness of receiving this mysterious food.

AFFECTIONS.—Let us express to Jesus Christ our sentiments of faith, gratitude, and love.

RESOLUTIONS.—To be generous toward God, who is so liberal to us.

POINT III

**THE MEN OF CAPHARNAUM ARE SCANDALIZED, AND
MANY DESERT HIM. THE APOSTLES ARE
FAITHFUL**

CONSIDERATION.—"Many, therefore, of His disciples, hearing it, said, This saying is hard, and who can hear it? And after this, many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him. Then Jesus said to the twelve, Will you also go away? And Simon Peter answered Him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life; and we have believed and have known that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God." (St. John 6: 61, 67-70.)

APPLICATION.—Let us, with St. Peter, declare our inviolable attachment to the person of our Divine Master. But knowing how naturally inconstant we are, let us beg and implore Him to help us, to defend us against our own weakness, and against the snares of our enemies.

COLLOQUY with Jesus, the kind and generous Pastor of our souls, who gives Himself for our food, in order to maintain and strengthen the spiritual life within us.

FEAST OF ST. BERNARD,

SECOND FOUNDER OF THE CISTERCIAN ORDER *

1st Prel. Behold the Saint in glory.

2d Prel. Beg. that he will obtain for us an ardent desire of perfection.

POINT I

LIFE OF ST. BERNARD IN THE WORLD

CONSIDERATION.— Bernard had the happiness of being born of parents who were pious as well as noble. His mother early taught him the love of chastity and a tender devotion to our Lady. Her pains were well rewarded. Bernard, endowed with natural eloquence, together with rare mental powers, made astonishing progress in study. His chastity was heroic; and to punish himself for an imprudent glance, he threw himself into the water during a severe frost; and as time went on, he celebrated the praises of our Lady with a success that none have ever surpassed. When he was twenty-three, he felt himself called to embrace the rigorous reform of the Cistercians, recently established by Blessed Robert. He followed this vocation with such fervor that he not only overcame the opposition of his brothers, but induced them, as well as twenty-five other gentlemen, to follow him. They all, together making thirty in number, entered Cîteaux the same day, and the following year (1114) made their profession into the hands of the Abbot St. Stephen.

APPLICATION.— Look into yourselves. Remember the happy circumstances of your parentage, your education, and especially your vocation, and you will see

* Born near Dijon, 1091; died, 1153, at Clairvaux, in the diocese of Langres; canonized, 1165. He founded 160 monasteries.

that God has not been less prodigal of His favors to you than toward St. Bernard.

AFFECTIONS.—Express to God your gratitude, and your deep regret at not having, like St. Bernard, corresponded generously with His graces.

RESOLUTIONS.—Frequently to consider the happiness of your holy vocation, and the many means of sanctification provided for you therein.

POINT II

THE SAINT'S LIFE IN THE SOLITUDE OF THE CLOISTER

CONSIDERATION.—The marvel of St. Bernard's cloister-life was, that his first fervor never relaxed, and therefore in a few years he became the model of eminent virtue. The mortification of his senses became almost natural to him. After passing a year at Citeaux, he did not know, as some circumstance proved, what kind of ceiling there was to the dormitory, nor how many windows there were in the choir of the church. He was equally mortified in other things; his usual food was brown bread dipped in warm water, and only under obedience was he induced to take sometimes, for the sake of his health, herb-pottage, seasoned with a little oil and honey. Dead to the world and to himself, he had no will or preference of his own, unless it was to undertake the lowest and most unpleasant offices in the community. Prayer was his greatest delight, and the time for it always seemed to him too short. One might say that his prayer was uninterrupted; for he never lost the presence of God, even in his intercourse with people of the world: and therefore he possessed an unction which won the hearts of all who came near him. To stimulate his fervor, the saint often said to himself, "Bernard, Bernard, why art thou come hither?"

APPLICATION.—"Would that I had been," say you, "in my turn, constant in following my first fervor! To what degree of perfection should I not now have attained?" Do not be contented with this barren regret; the past is no longer yours; but redouble your fervor, in order to regain what you have lost.

AFFECTIONS.—Regret your past faults. Pray for a stronger and more constant tendency to virtue.

RESOLUTIONS.—Like St. Bernard, to say to yourself, at least every morning, Why have I come here?

POINT III

LIFE OF THE SAINT IN THE MIDST OF THE TURMOIL OF BUSINESS

CONSIDERATION.—The peace and happiness that Bernard tasted in the solitude of the cloister were unspeakable; often he was heard to cry out, "O beata solitudo! O sola beatitudo." "O happy solitude! O only abode of happiness!" But God allowed this solitude to be often broken. The wisdom of which the saint, when Abbot of Clairvaux, gave so many brilliant proofs, drew the attention of the whole Church on him; kings and princes entreated him to arbitrate in their disputes; the Sovereign Pontiffs obliged him to undertake long and arduous journeys to pacify nations, to direct councils, to put an end to schisms, or to preach crusades. In the midst of all these honors, in this turmoil of business, the saint lost none of his humility or of his union with God. Wherever he went, he carried his solitude with him, says his biographer. Let us try to do the same.

COLLOQUY with St. Bernard.

THIRD EASTER AND THIRD YEAR OF THE MINISTRY OF JESUS CHRIST

HYPOCRISY AND ENVY OF THE PHARISEES

1st Prel. Behold Jesus discoursing with the Scribes and Pharisees.

2d Prel. Beg for a lively horror of hypocrisy, and a great love of solid virtue.

POINT I

JESUS DISPENSES HIMSELF FROM OBSERVING A POINT OF THE LAW

CONSIDERATION.—Jesus, having spent the Sabbath at Capharnaum, “walked in Galilee; for He would not walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill Him.” (St. John 7: 1.) Our Lord was not going, then, this year to keep the Pasch at Jerusalem. The law, indeed, ordered it; but He had the right of dispensing with His own law, and the plot against His life was a reason for such dispensation.

APPLICATION.—We ought to learn from this not to judge our superiors when we see them do or omit something contrary to the rule, or some point of discipline. Have they not the right to dispense themselves for good reasons as well as to dispense others? We do not generally know their reasons, they are not obliged to tell us them, and often they cannot. Our Lord also teaches us, by His example, to protect ourselves by flight and other natural means from the persecution of the wicked, from the evil they desire to do us, from their hatred of God. To act otherwise, when there is nothing to prevent us, would be presuming on grace. It would be also helping on evil by facilitating its execution. God gives the grace of martyrdom to whom and when He pleases.

AFFECTIONS.— Ask pardon for your rash judgments and presumptions.

RESOLUTIONS.— To avoid these faults carefully henceforth.

POINT II

JESUS BLAMES THE PHARISEES FOR PUTTING VAIN OBSERVANCES ABOVE THE LAW

CONSIDERATION.— The Jews of Jerusalem, thwarted in their murderous designs, tried at least to lower Jesus in the minds of the people. This is why, as St. Mark tells us, “Scribes who were come down from Jerusalem,” (St. Mark 3:22,) came to spy upon Him, to find Him out in some fault; when they had seen some of His disciples eat bread with common, that is, with unwashed hands, they found fault, and asked Him, “Why do Thy disciples transgress the tradition of the ancients?” (St. Matt. 15:2.) Their words betrayed their hypocrisy and envy; for they knew that the words of Isaias, “Wash yourselves, be clean,” were to be taken in a spiritual sense. Our Lord made them feel it, by saying, “Hypocrites, leaving the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men, the washing of pots and cups, and many other things.” (St. Mark 7:8.) Then He spoke to the people whom these hypocrites tried to deceive, saying, “Hear ye, and understand: not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but what cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.” (St. Matt. 15:11.)

APPLICATION.— The two great vices of the Scribes and Pharisees were hypocrisy and envy, and we detest them both; but are we entirely free from them? Let us seriously examine our thoughts and our words. What are they in relation to those of our companions whose merit and success eclipse ours?

AFFECTIONS.— Pray for grace to read the inmost recesses of your own heart.

RESOLUTIONS.— To guard against the delusions of envy and vainglory.

POINT III

JESUS PROVES THAT THE TRANSGRESSIONS OF THE LAW COME FROM THE HEART

CONSIDERATION.— And when He was come into the house from the multitude, Peter said to Him, "Expound to us this parable. But He said, Are you also yet without understanding? Do you not understand that whatsoever entereth into the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the privy? But the things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and these things defile a man. For from the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false testimonies, blasphemies. These are the things that defile a man. But to eat with unwashed hands doth not defile a man." (St. Matt. 15: 15–20.)

APPLICATION.— These words clearly prove — 1st, that what God especially asks from us is, purity of heart; 2d, that temptations, thoughts, images, impressions, which come to us from without, can not defile our hearts if we deny them entrance; 3d, that we ought carefully to watch over the affections of our hearts. How do we act? Is there not something kept back? Is there not in some corner of our heart a little idol, an inordinate affection, whose existence we deceive ourselves about?

COLLOQUY with St. Jane Francis de Chantal, whose Festival is celebrated this day.

WONDERFUL FAITH AND PRAYER

OF THE WOMAN OF CANAAN

1st Prel. Behold the Canaanite at the feet of Jesus.

2d Prel. Beg for faith and perseverance like hers.

POINT I

WONDERFUL FAITH AND PRAYER OF THE WOMAN OF CANAAN

CONSIDERATION.—Jesus, proceeding still further from Jerusalem, went northward toward the extreme limits of Galilee, and from thence into Phenicia, a country partly inhabited by the descendants of the ancient Canaanites. He had not the intention of then evangelizing that strange and idolatrous country. "Entering into a house," says St. Mark, "He would that no man should know it; and He could not be hid. For a woman, . . . a Gentile, . . . as soon as she heard of Him, . . . crying out said to Him, Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously troubled by a devil." (St. Mark 7: 24-26; St. Matt. 15: 22.)

APPLICATION.—Admire the qualities of this woman's prayer, that you may make them your own: 1st, she runs to Jesus without hesitation or delay; 2d, she draws near Him, animated with a lively faith in His omnipotence as God, and in His compassion as a man — *Lord, Son of David*; 3d, she is full of the idea that she is but a humble suppliant, and feels that she is helpless, "Have mercy on me;" 4th, she has perfect abnegation and resignation; she tells out her daughter's misery, and leaves her entirely to the goodness of Jesus. Is it thus that you draw near to God, that you pray?

AFFECTIONS.— Ask for the light and courage necessary to discover and correct the faults which deprive you of the fruit of your prayers.

RESOLUTIONS.— Before prayer, to excite in your heart sentiments of faith and humility.

POINT II

THE PERSEVERING FAITH AND PRAYER OF THE CANAANITE

CONSIDERATION.— It would seem that our Lord chose, for our instruction, to try the faith and perseverance of this woman severely, and she has been celebrated for it in the whole world. 1st, “He answered her not a word,” says the gospel, as if He did not deign to listen to her; 2d, when the Apostles pleaded for her, saying, “Send her away; for she crieth after us,” (and she will make You known,) He answered, “I was not sent but to the sheep that were lost of the house of Israel.” It was equivalent to a refusal; but the woman was not rebuffed; she “came in and fell down at His feet, adored Him, saying, Lord, help me; and she besought Him that He would cast forth the devil out of her daughter.” (St. Matt. 15: 23–25; St. Mark 7: 25, 26.)

APPLICATION.— One of the principal reasons why our prayers are not heard is our want of perseverance. We wish to obtain from God some great favor for ourselves or for a friend: we begin a novena for this intention: the first two or three days we faithfully say the prayers we promised; but is it the same on the sixth or seventh? Is it not difficult to keep up our fervor? Does it not happen that after having begged some favor two or three times without obtaining it, we leave off asking, as if we were fearful of importuning our good God? But does not the example of

the Canaanite prove that a holy importunity is pleasing to God? What ought we to think of this?

AFFECTIONS.— Acknowledge and regret your faults.

RESOLUTIONS.— To imitate the steady perseverance and the pious importunity of the woman of Canaan.

POINT III

THE FAITH AND PRAYER OF THE CANAANITE ARE VICTORIOUS

CONSIDERATION.— The faith and perseverance of the Canaanite had already triumphed over severe trials. Our Lord chose, however, to make her submit to one more before He granted her prayer. He said, "Suffer first the children to be filled; for it is not good to take the bread of the children, and cast it to the dogs." But these harsh words did not dismay the suppliant. "She answered and said to Him, Yea, Lord; for the whelps also eat under the table of the crumbs of the children." (St. Mark 7: 27, 28.) Our Lord seemed as if He were conquered, and said to her, "O woman, great is thy faith; be it done to thee as thou wilt; and her daughter was cured from that hour." (St. Matt. 15: 28.)

APPLICATION.— This daughter, the object of so much care, is, according to St. Jerome, (in St. Matt. 15,) an excellent type of our soul; and the anxiety of the mother the type of that assiduous care we ought to take for that soul, that we may preserve it not only from the possession of the devil, but also from the influence which this wily and malicious spirit tries to exercise upon it. Perhaps you suffer him to do so without knowing it, because you are not sufficiently recollected, not *vigilant in prayer*.

COLLOQUY with our Lord. Beg of Him to manifest to you the importance of salvation, and the value that you should set on your soul.

THE VALUE OF OUR SOULS

1st Prel. Imagine you hear Jesus Christ saying, "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (St. Mark 8:37.)

2d Prel. Beg the grace of really understanding what is the value of our souls.

POINT I

A SOUL IS WORTH MORE THAN THE WHOLE WORLD

CONSIDERATION.—"Nihil animæ æquiparari potest, ne universus quidem mundus." "Nothing is of equal value with a soul, not even the whole world," says St. John Chrysostom. One soul is worth infinitely more than all that this vast universe in its grandeur and beauty can offer our senses, because all of it is material and will be destroyed, while our soul is a spiritual being, immortal and intelligent, and destined for a supernatural life.

APPLICATION.—From this indisputable truth the doctors of the Church drew an equally indisputable conclusion, that is, the loss of the whole world is preferable to that of one soul; and yet how many souls are perishing every day and every minute! "I have seen them in a vision," said St. Teresa, "falling into hell as the leaves fall from the trees in autumn." From that time she redoubled her prayers, her tears, and her penances for the conversion of those who were walking in the path of perdition. And I—what pains do I take in saving souls?

AFFECTIONS.—Let us humble ourselves before God, finding that we are so insensible to the loss of souls, and beg of Him to enkindle in our hearts the fire of active, indefatigable, generous, and heroic zeal.

RESOLUTIONS.—To work with renewed ardor, and by every means in our power, for the salvation of souls, particularly those committed to our care.

POINT II

A SOUL IS WORTH THE BLOOD OF A GOD

CONSIDERATION.— By the rebellion or the sin of the first man, our souls fell under the power of the devil, and he was also condemned to eternal death. The God made man, Jesus Christ, could alone redeem man; for so He willed it. But what was to be the price of that redemption? “Vide quanto emit, et videbis quid emit.” “O man!” cries St. Austin, “will you learn the true value of your soul? See what the Son of God has done for the ransom of your soul, and you will know what it is worth.” (In Psalm 43.) And what has been given for it? By what has it been redeemed? “Non corruptibilibus auro vel argento redempti estis, sed pretioso sanguine Christi.” “Not with corruptible things, as gold or silver,” says St. Peter; “but with the precious blood of Christ.” (1 St. Peter 1: 18, 19.) Our Lord, then, who alone can judge things at their true value, did not think it too much to give the last drop of His blood for our souls.

APPLICATION.— And I — what have I done for my soul? Do I esteem and love it next to God? Do I not think more of my reputation or of my body than my soul? The least imputation troubles and pains me, and yet I do not care for the numberless stains by which venial sin defaces my soul. “I am eager to enrich my mind with knowledge, and I am slow and remiss in adorning my soul with virtues and merits. Under a little suffering, or in a slight bodily indisposition, I send for the doctor or infirmarian, and I have courage, if need be, to submit to painful remedies; but when my soul is wasting away with a disease which may be fatal, I neglect to send for the spiritual physician, or to employ the remedies his experience and zeal suggest to me.”

AFFECTIONS.—Astonishment and indignation at our blindness. Humble petitions.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will henceforth devote at least as much care to my spiritual as to my temporal interests.

POINT III

A SOUL IS LIKE IN WORTH BUT TO GOD HIMSELF

CONSIDERATION.—Why have many Saints allowed themselves to use such an expression? 1st. Because a soul is a breath of the Divinity; He “breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul.” (Gen. 2: 7.) 2d. Because God made it to His own likeness; and it is the living image of God on the earth. 3d. Because God made man has sacrificed Himself for it: “He delivered Himself for me,” (Gal. 2: 20,) says the Apostle. 4th. Because God will give Himself to the soul as its reward. “Ego sum merces tua magna nimis.”

COLLOQUY with the Guardian Angel of my soul.

JESUS RETURNS TO GALILEE,

WHERE HE CURES ONE BORN DEAF AND DUMB

1st Prel. Behold the deaf and dumb in a suppliant attitude before Jesus.

2d Prel. Beg Jesus to preserve us from, or if need be to cure us of spiritual deafness and dumbness.

POINT I

JESUS LEAVES PHENICIA, AND RETURNS TO GALILEE

CONSIDERATION.—St. Mark, after having told us the history of the Canaanite, immediately adds, “And again going out of the coasts of Tyre, He came to Sidon, to the sea of Galilee through the midst of the coast of Decapolis.” (St. Mark 7:31.) No other miracle or conversion is recorded in Phenicia. We must conclude, then, that our Lord had no other view in going there than to reward this heathen woman for her fidelity to the secret inspirations of grace, to lead her into the way of salvation, and convert her to the faith of the true God by the miracle wrought upon her daughter; in one word, to save a soul.

APPLICATION.—Our Divine Lord teaches us by this that we should look on the salvation of a single soul as the worthy fruit of a laborious mission. This is a very consoling thought for a Brother of Charity, for instance, who has but one sick person to nurse, for a teacher who has only one pupil to educate, for a missionary who appears to convert but very few sinners. Our Lord teaches us to exercise our zeal and charity equally in a wide or narrow circle; the merit of both consists in obedience. You believe this Divine teaching; do you make it the rule of your conduct? By obedience you are sometimes sent to a great and honorable mission, sometimes to a small, insignificant one;

for the first you prepare carefully and eagerly, for the other with indifference and uneasiness. Why is this contrast? From zeal of God's glory? Not at all; but from your vanity. Examine your conscience, and it will answer you.

AFFECTIONS.— Acknowledge your unworthiness, humble yourself, and repent.

RESOLUTIONS.— To seek in all things only God and His holy will.

POINT II

THE LORD CURES THE DEAF-MUTE

CONSIDERATION.— Jesus had scarcely entered Galilee when “they bring to Him,” says the Gospel, “one deaf and dumb; and they besought Him that He would lay His hands upon him. And taking him from the multitude apart, He put His fingers into his ears, and spitting, He touched his tongue; and looking up to heaven, He groaned, and said to him, *Ephpheta*, which is, Be thou opened. And immediately his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke right.” (St. Mark 7: 32–35.)

APPLICATION.— The gospel history appeals both to our eyes and hearts; it is a picture. Let us look at it in detail, and the application will present itself. Begin with the *persons*. 1st. The multitude — they run toward Jesus from all sides, and can not leave Him; and I am so tardy in going to visit Him in the Blessed Sacrament, and always so ready to leave Him. 2d. The *person of Jesus Christ* — His every feature, His whole bearing, breathes gravity, sanctity, unspeakable sweetness; oh! what a contrast to my levity, my worldly manners, my rudeness! 3d. The deaf-mute — he could only express his feelings by looks of love and confidence; Jesus understood them, and was touched. A look of love and compassion cast on my crucifix can

draw down many graces on me, and I neglect to do it! Let us next contemplate the *actions* — they are full of mystery and of lessons. Jesus takes the deaf-mute apart to teach us to avoid ostentation; He touched his ears with His fingers and his tongue with spittle, He raised His eyes and breathed a sigh toward heaven, to let us understand that the cure of spiritual deafness and dumbness is difficult, that it is above our strength; but that we can obtain it by earnest prayers and many entreaties from God. How have I profited by these lessons of my Saviour's? *

AFFECTIONS and RESOLUTIONS.— These will naturally follow the preceding contemplation.

POINT III

JESUS IS ADMIRER AND PRAISED

CONSIDERATION.— Having witnessed the miracle wrought upon the deaf-mute, and on many others who were cured the same day of different infirmities, “they wondered and said, Bene omnia fecit.” “He hath done all things well.”

APPLICATION.— How happy should we be if these words could in all truth be graven on our tombs, “Bene omnia fecit.” “He hath done all things well.” Well before God, by doing all things in their proper order with great fervor and purity of intention; well before men, by acting under obedience and giving edification. Let us not neglect any means that we may obtain such a testimony.

COLLOQUY with the Apostle St. Bartholomew, whose Feast we celebrate.

* The species of meditation known as *contemplation* consists in reflecting thus on historical facts, and on the *persons*, the *words*, and the *actions* of which the consideration leads us to practical applications or conclusions. This method is at once simple and efficacious. The present work, consisting as it does of Meditations on the historical facts of the Life of our Lord Jesus Christ, will be found specially adapted for the purpose.

SECOND MULTIPLICATION OF THE LOAVES

1st Prel. Imagine you see a plain where are seated four thousand men divided into bands, who are miraculously fed with seven loaves.

2d Prel. Beg for deep feelings of faith, confidence, and love.

POINT I

THE MIRACLE

CONSIDERATION.—The second multiplication of the loaves took place in the same way as the first. St. Mark tells us of it thus: "In those days again, when there was a great multitude, and had nothing to eat; calling His disciples together, He saith to them, I have compassion on the multitude; for behold they have now been with Me three days, and have nothing to eat: and if I shall send them away fasting to their homes, they will faint in the way: for some of them come from afar off. And His disciples answered Him, From whence can any one fill them here with bread in the wilderness? And He asked them, How many loaves have ye? Who said, Seven. And taking the seven loaves, giving thanks, He broke, and gave to the disciples for to set before them; and they set them before the people. And they had a few little fishes: and He blessed them, and commanded them to be set before them. And they did eat and were filled: and they took up that which was left of the fragments seven baskets," (St. Mark 8: 1-8;) "and they that did eat were four thousand men, besides women and children." (St. Matt. 15: 38.)

APPLICATION.—How full of encouragement and consolation are these words, "I have compassion on this multitude!" It was so like the heart of Jesus—always watchful, always alive to our wants, to our sufferings of soul and body. What strength there is in

that thought! "They have now been with Me for three days." Our Good Master, then, keeps an exact account of the time, the days and the minutes that we give to His service: and "some of them come from afar off." Not only does He reckon the time of our service, but He weighs its merit, that He may one day reward it. What an encouragement! "If I shall send them away fasting to their homes, they will faint in the way." His solicitude for us extends even to our future. That future which is hidden from us, and which terrifies us so often, He sees *in regard to each of us*; He sees what will be for our happiness; and He sees the means of driving away what will do us harm, and of gaining what is advantageous and necessary for us; when necessary, He will work a miracle to produce it for us. We see the proof of this in the above.

AFFECTIONS.—Admiration, praise, blessing, confidence, and gratitude.

RESOLUTIONS.—To seek support and consolation in the Heart of Jesus.

POINT II

MYSTICAL MEANING OF THE MIRACLE

CONSIDERATION.—Interpreters point out many mysterious differences between the first and second multiplication of the loaves. First, they figure the different way in which our Lord acts toward the Synagogue and the Church, between the faithful of the old law and the new. In the first miracle, the old law was figured by the number five, signifying the five books of the Pentateuch, in which this law was contained; at the second, the new law was figured by the number four, to signify the four gospels in which it is contained. At the first, it was said that the people sought Jesus because of the miracle; at the second, no mention

is made of their motive, because Christians who live according to the Spirit should detach themselves from earth and devote themselves to spiritual things. At the first, only barley bread was given, the food of slaves; at the second, wheaten bread, the food of children. At the first, there remained twelve baskets, which figured the twelve patriarchs of the old law; at the second, seven, which represent the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, and the seven Sacraments instituted for our nourishment in our journey toward eternity.

APPLICATION.—Let us admire the economy of the Divine wisdom in both the old and new law; let us thank God that we were born children of the new law, and thus favored beyond the Jews. We possess the truth, they had but the shadow; we possess the Incarnate Word, they had but the promise of Him; finally, we are fed with His body and His precious blood, they had only the manna, which was but the type of it. But if we enjoy greater advantages than they, God also requires from us a still greater sanctity. Are we trying to attain it?

COLLOQUY with our merciful Saviour.—Let us thank Him for the gifts conferred on us through His liberality — for the miracles of mercy which He constantly works in our behalf. Beg of Him that we may be confirmed in His holy love, that our hearts may expand with confidence and spiritual joy.— Or else with St. Louis, King of France, whose Feast we celebrate. (Died, 1270.)

JESUS IN THE COUNTRY OF MAGEDAN,

WHERE HE IS TEMPTED BY THE PHARISEES, TO-
GETHER WITH THE SADDUCEES

1st Prel. Behold Jesus discoursing with the Pharisees and Sadducees.

2d Prel. Beg the spirit of truth and simplicity.

POINT I

JESUS DWELLS IN THE COUNTRY OF MAGEDAN

CONSIDERATION.—Immediately after the miracle of the loaves, our Lord went up into a ship with His disciples. He passed the eastern shore of the sea of Galilee, and came into the land of Magedan, a country which had not been yet evangelized. Interpreters remark on this occasion, that, as we follow the footsteps of our Divine Lord, we easily see that His design was to make Himself known to all the house of Israel, so that there should not be a province in Judea which had not been enlightened by His teaching, and witnessed His miracles. It was a figure of what His Apostles were to do in the whole world.

APPLICATION.—Compare your conduct with that of your Divine Model. When you have succeeded in some public matter, you like to remain at the scene of the occurrence, to attract observation; when you have not succeeded, you are eager to escape notice, and to get away. Jesus does the opposite. He was always eager to hide Himself from the sight and the applause of those who were astonished at a wonderful miracle. Acknowledge that your conduct is little in conformity with that of your Divine Master.

AFFECTIONS.—"Not to us, O Lord! not to us, but to Thy name give glory." (Psalm 113:9.)

RESOLUTIONS.—To desire and seek God alone as the witness of our good deeds.

POINT II

JESUS REPROVES THE PHARISEES, AND LEAVES THEM

CONSIDERATION.—The Gospel tells us nothing of the preaching and miracles of Jesus in Magedan, but it relates the hypocritical alliance between the Pharisees and Sadducees, who were vehemently opposed to each other, but, like all sects, could agree in hostility toward our Lord. “Et accesserunt ad eum Pharisæi et Sadducæi tentantes, et rogaverunt eum, ut signum de cœlo ostenderet eis.” “And there came to Him the Pharisees and Sadducees, tempting, and they asked Him to show them a sign from heaven.” (St. Matt. 16: 1.) They desired to lower Him in the opinion of the people, by taxing Him with inability if He did not work the wonder, or sorcery if He did perform it. But Jesus, knowing their malice, sighing deeply in spirit, saith, “A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and a sign shall not be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet. And He left them, and went away.” (St. Matt. 16: 4.)

APPLICATION.—Let this teach us to do for the good cause what the impious do for an evil one. They had mutually sacrificed themselves and their own opinions, that they might attack Jesus Christ and His Church. Let us detest all egotism, jealousy, and obstinate attachment to our own judgment. Let us be united in heart and mind in our prayers and efforts, losing sight of ourselves, and seeking only the triumph of the good cause, of truth over error. How have you acted?

AFFECTIONS.—Beg of God that you may die to all sentiments of self-love, jealousy, and vanity.

RESOLUTIONS.—To pay special attention during this day to our thoughts, inclinations and intentions.

POINT III

JESUS REPROVES THE APOSTLES FOR THEIR LACK OF
FAITH AND INTELLIGENCE

CONSIDERATION.—Our Lord having fulfilled His mission in Magadan, went up into the ship to return to Galilee. During the voyage, desiring to guard His Apostles against error, He said to them, "Take heed, and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." (St. Matt. 16: 6.) They interpreted these words in a material sense, and recollected that they had forgotten to bring enough bread, and thought He referred to that. "And Jesus knowing it, said, Why do you think within yourselves, O ye of little faith, for that you have no bread? Do you not remember the seven loaves among four thousand men, and how many baskets you took up? Why do you not understand that it was not concerning bread that I said to you, Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees? Then they understood that He said they should be beware of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees." (St. Matt. 16: 8-12.)

APPLICATION.—Are we not to blame as much as the Apostles for our want of confidence, and our little comprehension of spiritual things, when we have received so many proofs of the Divine protection, and have been for so long a time in the school of perfection?

COLLOQUY with your holy Patron.

CURE

OF THE BLIND MAN OF BETHSAIDA

1st Prel. Behold Jesus laying His hands on the eyes of the blind man.

2d Prel. Beg for great light and unction from the Holy Ghost.

POINT I

JESUS LISTENS TO THE PRAYERS MADE TO HIM
ON BEHALF OF THE BLIND MAN

CONSIDERATION.—“And they came to Bethsaida, and they bring to Him a blind man, and they besought Him that He would touch him. And taking the blind man by the hand, He led him out of the town, and spitting upon his eyes, laying His hands on him, He asked him if he saw any thing. And looking up, he said, I see men, as it were trees, walking.” (St. Mark 8: 22–24.)

APPLICATION.—He led the blind man out of the town, and spit upon his eyes, an emblem, says Venerable Bede, of the unction of the Holy Spirit. What does our Lord teach us in this? That to obtain perfect knowledge, and taste or unction for the things of God, we ought from time to time, in retreat, to isolate ourselves completely from the world, and all the occupations of exterior life. The rule makes a *retreat* once a year a sacred obligation. Happy should we be if, like contemplatives, we could pass our whole life in it. But we can really do still better by joining the sweetness of contemplation to the merit of action, by keeping ourselves in the spirit of retreat by recollection and the interior life. Is it not from this want of recollection that, like the blind man, you see the things of the supernatural order so dimly? that you

so often judge rashly? that you see things in a wrong light?

AFFECTIONS.—An ardent desire to combine the contemplative with the active life.

RESOLUTIONS.—To make generous and untiring efforts for this end.

POINT II

JESUS GIVES SIGHT TO THE BLIND MAN ONLY BY DEGREES

CONSIDERATION.—"After that, again He laid His hands upon his eyes, and he began to see, and was restored so that he saw all things clearly." (St. Mark 8: 25.) This miraculous cure is remarkable as being the only one our Lord performed by degrees. Some believe that the dispositions of the blind man were at first very imperfect, and gradually became perfect. Other interpreters think that our Lord wished to prefigure the slow and gradual progress of grace in the soul.

APPLICATION.—Let us learn from this, that God generally acts in our hearts according to the dispositions He finds in them. If they are good, He does great things; if they are imperfect, He does less; and therefore it is that many people have such little light in their ordinary devotions, particularly in their reception of the Sacraments, because their lack of diligence and fervor arrests the flow of grace from God, and prevents Him from carrying out the full designs of His mercy. Does not experience show us this? Let us learn also not to be discouraged or to lose patience when, after a certain time of prayer and endeavor, we still see our pious desires unrealized, and we have not obtained the entire cure of some spiritual infirmity, or gained a higher degree of virtue. God

has His own times. By degrees, He leads us to His ends. Perseverance will infallibly lead us to them. What is your perseverance?

AFFECTIONS.—Pray for an energetic spirit, and a docile heart, with great fervor.

RESOLUTIONS.—To perform all your religious duties in the spirit of faith and confidence.

POINT III

**JESUS BIDS THE BLIND MAN GO TO HIS HOME,
AND NOT TO REMAIN IN BETHSAIDA**

CONSIDERATION.—“And He sent him into his house, saying, Go into thy house, and if thou enter into the town, tell nobody.” (St. Mark 8:26.) Our Lord bade him go home and recollect himself, reflect on the grace he had received, and give thanks to God. He forbade him to satisfy the curiosity of the inhabitants of Bethsaida, to punish them for deriving so little fruit from the number of miracles wrought in the midst of them, as we learn from our Lord’s words on another occasion, “Væ tibi, Bethsaida.” “Woe unto thee, Bethsaida.” (St. Matt. 11:21.)

APPLICATION.—We should always have before our minds the benefits God has given us; we should have an ardent gratitude for them, and a great dread of not profiting by them. Have we any thing to reproach ourselves with on these points?

COLLOQUY with the Blessed Virgin, our advocate with Jesus.

FEAST OF ST. AUGUSTINE

BISHOP OF HIPPO, AND FOUNDER OF THE ORDERS
WHICH BEAR HIS NAME *

1st Prel. Imagine you see the Saint holding in his hand a burning heart.

2d Prel. Beg that he will obtain for you compunction of heart.

POINT I

HIS ESTRANGEMENT FROM GOD

CONSIDERATION.—Augustine was richly endowed with natural gifts. He had rare eloquence, and a profound and subtle genius, but they were all worse than useless to him. The sense of his superior talents and the praises he received filled him with pride, estranged him from God, from humble submission to the Church, and cast him into the heresy of the Manicheans. Having lost the fear of God, he became the slave of his passions, and led a sinful life till he was thirty years old. His great genius did indeed make him feel the shame of being thus enchained by vice. He blushed for himself, he desired to be free, but he had not strength to do it. It needed a miracle of grace to bring him back to God and to himself.

APPLICATION.—Remember your youth. Had it not some resemblance of that of St. Augustine? Were there not moments of passion when you deliberately abandoned God and gave yourself up to the delusions of this proud world? Was there not a considerable time passed in estrangement from God, in slavery to some shameful passion? If your conscience tells you it was so, thank our Lord for having, by a miracle of

* Born, 354; baptized, 387; made bishop, 395; died, 430.

grace, rescued you from the abyss and brought you back to Him. If by an especial privilege He preserved you from the contagion of vice, thank Him for it still more.

AFFECTIONS.— Repentance, gratitude, acts of fidelity.

RESOLUTIONS.— To pray for those whom vice has estranged from God.

POINT II

HIS RETURN TO GOD

CONSIDERATION.— It cost St. Augustine a long and severe struggle before he broke his chains and triumphed over his habits of sin. He says in his *Confessions* that these habits had become a sort of second nature; that it seemed impossible for him to become chaste, to live in sobriety and purity; but that this fancied impossibility was really only a want of energetic will and a neglect of prayer. "I was like," he says, "to a man who wishes to rise at a certain hour, and when the time comes, yields to the pleasure of giving way, and falls asleep again." But grace at last triumphed over this inveterate sinner. He became the model of true penitents; the most glorious champion of the faith; the scourge of heretics; the light and one of the most illustrious fathers of the Church.

APPLICATION.— It may happen that a religious loses his first fervor and contracts bad habits: the habit of giving way to idleness; transgressing many of his rules without scruple; of omitting for silly reasons his spiritual exercises, or going through them very negligently; or praying without respect or devotion; of permitting familiarities and dangerous curiosities; of criticisms or uncalled-for murmurs without remorse, etc. Though these habits are not as revolting as those St. Augustine had contracted, they are not less diffi-

cult to root up. "I have rarely seen it done," says St. Bernard. We must not, however, despair. All things are possible to grace; but it must have a generous and continual cooperation. If, then, you say it is impossible, you deny the truth; you expose your own cowardice. What ought you to think about this?

AFFECTIONS.—Acknowledge your faults. Lament them, and ask forgiveness.

RESOLUTIONS.—Never despair of the assistance and the efficacy of grace for your conversion and amendment.

POINT III

HIS LOVE FOR GOD

CONSIDERATION.—St. Augustine is generally represented holding a burning heart in his hand, as a symbol of his ardent love, a love which was principally manifested by his indefatigable zeal. From the day of his baptism, which he received at the age of thirty-two from the hands of St. Ambrose, he never ceased for the forty-three remaining years of his life to preach and write. He brought many sinners back to God, and many heretics and schismatics, so numerous in his days, to the unity of the faith. The influence of his zeal is still felt; it has survived him, after fourteen centuries have passed, in his innumerable ascetical and dogmatical writings, in the religious orders which he founded, especially in those women, so admirable for their charity and zeal, who, under the name of Augustines, serve the hospitals in so many towns.

COLLOQUY with St. Augustine. Congratulate him, and ask his intercession. Beg of him to obtain for you great love for God and your neighbor, with ardent zeal for your own sanctification.

CONFESSION AND PRIMACY

OF ST. PETER

1st Prel. Behold Jesus saying, "Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build My Church." (St. Matt. 16: 18.)

2d Prel. Ask for a tender love for the Church of Jesus Christ,

POINT I

THE DIVINITY OF JESUS CHRIST IS REVEALED TO ST. PETER

CONSIDERATION.—"And Jesus went out, and His disciples, into the town of Cæsarea Philippi; and in His way He asked His disciples, saying to them, Who do men say that I am? Who answered him, saying, John the Baptist, but some Elias, and others as one of the prophets." (St. Mark 8: 27, 28.) "And Jesus saith to them, But who do you say I am? Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answering said to him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar Jona; because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but My Father who is in Heaven." (St. Matt. 16: 16, 17.)

APPLICATION.—How much instruction there is in all this! *1st.* Before he chose the chief of the Apostles, Jesus prayed as He had prayed before He chose the twelve: we ought to begin all our actions with prayer. *2d.* He asked what had been said of Him, not from vanity, but that His Apostles might acknowledge His Divinity, that Peter especially might proclaim it solemnly. Do we wish to know what is thought and said of us only with the desire of becoming better?

AFFECTIONS.—Help me, O Lord! to know myself, that I may be enabled to correct my faults.

RESOLUTIONS.— To ask ourselves often, not what men think of us, but how we stand in the sight of God, in order that we may act in all things in conformity with His holy will.

POINT II

THE PRIMACY OF THE CHURCH IS GIVEN TO ST. PETER

CONSIDERATION.— The solemn profession of the Divinity of Jesus Christ made by St. Peter, enlightened from on high, was instantly rewarded. Our Lord, looking on him with predilection, said, "And I say to thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (St. Matt. 16: 18.) These words clearly show us that the Church will endure as long as the world; that she will be violently persecuted; but that at last she will triumph over all persecutions.

APPLICATION.— Combats and victories; this is, then, what Jesus predicted for His Church and her visible Head. Eighteen centuries have borne witness to the truth of the prophecy. We must not, then, be cast down or even surprised at the universal conspiracy formed in our days against the Church and her Chief, with more unity and cleverness than ever: she will come out victoriously from this great trial, as she has so often done before: but till that moment comes, what sorrows she has to endure, what a loss of souls to suffer! It is our task above all others — we who are her privileged children, the advanced guard of the Church — to console her, to make it up to her, to come to her aid by redoubling our fervor, our prayers, and satisfactory works. How do we act? Do we not content ourselves as so many others do with sighing in

secret over the troubles of our Mother, or in uttering barren invectives against her persecutors?

AFFECTIONS.— Let us offer ourselves to God as victims of expiation, and unite with the Church in praying for the humiliation of her enemies.

RESOLUTIONS.— To rejoice that we are, as religious, always the first objects of the hatred of the impious, the first to be exposed to the sword of persecution.

POINT III

THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN ARE PROMISED TO ST. PETER

CONSIDERATION.— Our Lord did not think it enough to give St. Peter the primacy of order and jurisdiction in the Church militant; He willed that His power should extend to the Church triumphant; for as soon as He had said, "Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build My church," He added, "and I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven." (St. Matt. 16: 19.)

APPLICATION.— The astonishing power which Jesus Christ thus gave to St. Peter, and by him to the Sovereign Pontiffs, not only raised them above the kings of the earth, but also above the other Apostles. For He said to all, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain," etc. (St. John 20: 23.) But to Peter alone did He say, "I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven," a symbol of supreme power. Let us rejoice for the Prince of the Apostles; let us rejoice still more for ourselves; for these keys were not given for himself, but for us — to open to us the doors of heaven.

COLLOQUY with the Blessed Apostle St. Peter.

JESUS FORETELLS HIS PASSION

AND TEACHES SELF-DENIAL

1st Prel. Behold Jesus going before us, carrying His cross.

2d Prel. Beg for the spirit of abnegation, and love of the cross.

POINT I

JESUS MAKES KNOWN TO THE APOSTLES HIS
PASSION AND DEATH

CONSIDERATION.—The Apostles, though they believed in the Divinity of their Master, still dreamed of His future royalty on earth, and this thought gratified their vanity. Jesus chose to undeceive them at once. “He began to shew to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the ancients and scribes and chief priests, and be put to death, and the third day rise again.” Upon which Peter, actuated by a mistaken zeal for his Master’s glory, cried out, “Lord, be it far from Thee; this shall not be to Thee.” He was thus opposing the designs of the Son of God become the Son of Man to redeem mankind by the mystery of the Cross. “Who turning, said to Peter, Go behind Me, Satan; * thou art a scandal unto Me, because thou savorest not the things that are of God, but the things that are of men.” (St. Matt. 16: 21–23.)

APPLICATION.—May not this last reproach be addressed somewhat to you? Do you not show more taste for the study of sciences, for secular reading, for all that can increase your reputation and your bodily welfare, than for the study of sanctity, for spiritual reading, for the practice of humility, morti-

* This word in Hebrew signifies *adversary*, and is given to Lucifer, because he is the great enemy of God and men.

fication, and piety? Examine yourself, and have the courage to answer yourself in all sincerity.

AFFECTIONS.— Surprise at our own insensibility; shame and repentance.

RESOLUTIONS.— To seek new means of securing our spiritual progress.

POINT II

JESUS ENJOINS ON US ABSOLUTE SELF-DENIAL

CONSIDERATION.— Man redeemed from eternal ruin by the death and resurrection of the Redeemer can not attain to eternal life and glory save by following in the footsteps of Him who has made an entire abnegation of Himself. Our Lord wished to make this fully understood, not only by His Apostles, but by all. "And calling the multitude together, with His disciples, He said to them, If any man will follow me, (in the way that leads to eternal life) let him deny himself." (St. Mark 8: 34.)

APPLICATION.— The self-denial which our Lord rigorously exacts from us extends to every thing which is an obstacle to eternal salvation. Life even is not excepted. For, said Jesus Christ, "Whosoever shall save his life, (at the expense of what he owes to God) shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the Gospel, shall save it." (St. Mark 8: 35.) It is as if He said, The true life of man is not his precarious existence in this world, but his future life eternally happy or unhappy; and he who would save or prolong his present life, at the expense of what he owes to God, will lose that life of eternal happiness; while, on the contrary, he who prefers to lose it rather than be false to God will be sure of a happy eternity. He will have saved all, while the other will have lost all without gaining any thing in return. For, our Lord adds, "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the

whole world, and suffer the loss of his soul; or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (St. Mark 8: 36, 37.)

AFFECTIONS.—Let us thank our Merciful Saviour, who has enabled us to understand this argument, and has inspired us with courage to renounce all temporal advantages in order to secure to ourselves eternal blessings.

RESOLUTIONS.—To strive to die daily more perfectly to ourselves and to the world.

POINT III

OUR LORD LAYS ON US AN OBLIGATION OF CARRYING THE CROSS AFTER HIM

CONSIDERATION.—Jesus, after having said these memorable words, "If any man will follow Me, let him deny himself," added, "and take up his cross, and follow Me." (St. Mark 8: 34.)

APPLICATION.—This last condition, though it may be very contrary to our inclination, is far less difficult to execute than the first; for let us remark well, it is not *His* cross that Jesus obliges us to carry, but our *own*, much lighter than His; besides, it is not He who lays it on us, the conditions of life make it inevitable that we should have one. But if we bear it after Him for supernatural motives, to satisfy with Him Divine justice, to resemble Him more closely, and have a greater share in His glory in heaven, it will appear light to us; little by little we shall come to love it; it will be a happiness to us.

COLLOQUY with St. Rose of Lima, whose love for the cross was so great that, although she had preserved her baptismal robe unstained, she practiced penance in every possible manner. Her Feast is celebrated this day.

OF THE THREE DEGREES

OF SELF-DENIAL OR HUMILITY

1st Prel. Behold our Blessed Lady standing under the cross of Jesus.
2d Prel. Beg for a love of suffering and contempt endured for Jesus.

POINT I

FIRST DEGREE OF SELF-DENIAL OR HUMILITY

CONSIDERATION.— That forsaking of ourselves and of creatures on which Jesus Christ insists so strongly has many degrees, and especially three. The first consists in the habitual disposition of losing all things — possessions, reputation, health, life itself — and to suffer all things rather than commit a mortal sin. This first degree is necessary for all Christians; without it, an act of love would be a lie in their mouths, and they will be out of the way of salvation.

APPLICATION.— Let us thank God for having called us to this state of life, where all are supposed to be, and to continue, in this first degree. But let us not be under any delusion; we can not keep ourselves in it save by the assistance of grace, and in certain circumstances of a special grace. Besides, in changing our dress we have not changed our nature. We are always men feeble and inconstant. Let us, then, be humble, always distrustful of self, and prompt in having recourse to prayer in temptations. However, the religious who on principle, is contented with the first degree, will be little worthy of the name he bears, and by no means sure of salvation.

AFFECTIONS.— Acts of faith, humility, distrust of yourself, and confidence in the assistance of divine grace.

RESOLUTIONS.— Carefully to avoid all occasions of sin.

POINT II

SECOND DEGREE OF SELF-DENIAL OR HUMILITY

CONSIDERATION.— This second degree consists in the habitual disposition of losing all and suffering all, rather than commit a deliberate venial sin. Every true religious ought to strive to attain it, to be able to witness to himself that he has attained the second degree; for, if not, 1st. It is with difficulty he will keep in the first, or rather he will not do it; experience teaches us too often the truth of those words of the Holy Spirit, "*Qui spernit modica paulatim decidet.*" "He that contemneth small things shall fall by little and little." (Ecclus. 19: 1.) 2d. He can not imagine he is fulfilling the obligation he has contracted before God of tending to perfection; for nothing is more opposed to perfection than venial sin. 3d. He can never enjoy true peace of heart, because he is resisting God's designs for him, "*Quis restitit Deo, et pacem habuit?*" "Who hath resisted Him, and hath had peace?" (Job 9: 4.) 4th. He will never be fit to do great things for the salvation of souls.

APPLICATION.— It is in our power to attain the second degree, and to remain in it. The proof of it is given to us in the acts of beatification and in the lives of many servants of God. It is said in the lives of the Venerable Du Pont and Bellarmine that they made a vow of never voluntarily committing a venial sin, and they were faithful to their vow until death. What they did with the help of grace we can also do; but have we seriously resolved on it? What means have we employed? With what perseverance?

AFFECTIONS.— Beg of God to increase your horror of venial sin.

RESOLUTIONS.— Through the practice of the particular examination, to remove, by degrees, all causes of sin.

POINT III

THIRD DEGREE OF SELF-DENIAL OR HUMILITY

CONSIDERATION.— This third degree consists in the disposition of rather being poor with Jesus Christ in His poverty than in abundance; of being rather forgotten and despised with Jesus Christ, who was humiliated and injured, than to live in honor; to be rather on the cross with Jesus crucified than to enjoy the consolations and delights of this life, *in order that we may have a greater remembrance with Jesus*, our Divine Model, and be better able to prove our love.

APPLICATION.— This habitual disposition, or third degree of humility, is not impossible to human weakness sustained by grace. Witness the Apostles and innumerable martyrs who rejoiced in being stripped of all, scoffed at, spit upon, condemned to death for the name of Jesus; witness also so many persons educated in luxury and delights, whom we see vowing themselves for love of Jesus to poverty, and the austerities of the cloister. These examples tend to encourage and stimulate us; and besides, what blessings belong to this third degree! It is the perfect imitation of Jesus Christ; it gives peace and joy of heart in the midst of tribulations, an abundance of divine blessings, the assurance of salvation, the pledge of greater glory in heaven. How are you relatively to this third degree? What has been the end of those resolutions made in so many retreats, that you would neglect nothing that would enable you to attain it?

COLLOQUY with the Blessed Virgin, who participated to so great an extent in the suffering and ignominy of Jesus.

FIRST SUNDAY IN SEPTEMBER

FEAST OF THE HOLY GUARDIAN ANGELS.*

1st Prel. Behold young Tobias traveling in company with the angel Raphael.

2d Prel. Beg for a true and solid devotion to our angel guardian.

POINT I

WHAT IS THE DIGNITY OF OUR ANGEL GUARDIANS?

CONSIDERATION.—Among the most precious gifts of God's mercy to men should be reckoned that communion or spiritual intercourse which He has established between us and the holy angels, the order which He has given to these blessed spirits to take care of each of us; for, says the Psalmist, "He hath given His angels charge over thee in all thy ways." (Psalm 90: 11.) But what are these guardian angels? They are pure spirits, created after the image of God, endowed with beauty, power, agility, and intelligence, which are beyond all human conception. They are in regard of God and heaven where He manifests His glory, what the princes and first dignitaries of a kingdom are in regard of a king and his court. This angel, then, who is day and night by my side, is a prince of the celestial court, whose dignity infinitely surpasses that of the greatest monarchs of the earth.

APPLICATION.—I believe this truth, but I scarcely ever think about it. When I am alone, I think and act as if no creature were near me witnessing my sufferings and my actions. If I had a more lively faith, what consolation and what a charm I should find in conversing with this holy and wonderful friend, in telling him

* This Meditation should be kept for the first Sunday of the month.

my troubles and anxieties; in asking him for counsel, strength, and courage in my doubts, sufferings, and temptations! We read in the lives of many saints that their ardent faith and tender devotion toward their angel guardian obtained for them the grace of seeing him and conversing familiarly with him. We find this especially in the lives of St. Camillus, St. Frances of Rome, and St. Rose of Lima.

AFFECTIONS.—Let us thank God who has given us an angel as guide, and ask pardon of our good angel himself for our frequent forgetfulness of his presence.

RESOLUTIONS.—To invoke and consult our Angel Guardian, and endeavor to spread around us devotion to the holy angels.

POINT II

WHAT SERVICES DO OUR ANGEL GUARDIANS RENDER TO US?

CONSIDERATION.—"He hath given His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways." In obedience to this command, our angel guardian — 1st, watches with tender care over the preservation of our body, our health, and our life, which are exposed to so many dangers. 2d. He takes still greater care of our immortal soul and of our spiritual interests; he teaches us, brings good thoughts to our minds, shows us the snares laid for us, encourages and sustains us in the spiritual combat, secretly reproves us for our faults, and draws us by gentle inspirations to perform our duties. 3d. He does for us what Raphael did for young Tobias — he guides us through the dangers of this life. 4th. He assists us especially at the hour of death.

APPLICATION.—Let us admire and imitate, as much as we can, three things — 1st. The *perfect indifference* of these angels about all that they are desired to do.

2d. Their *recollection and purity* in the midst of the noise and corruption of the world. 3d. Their *immovable peace*, notwithstanding their ill success in their good offices.

AFFECTIONS.—Let us beg earnestly of God the grace to attain as far as possible the perfection which we admire in our good angel.

RESOLUTIONS.—For this end, we should familiarize ourselves with the prayer indulged by the Sovereign Pontiffs Pius VI. and Pius VII. “Holy angel to whose care I am committed, enlighten, protect, direct, and govern me this day.”

POINT III

WHAT ARE OUR OBLIGATIONS TOWARD OUR ANGEL GUARDIANS?

CONSIDERATION.—St. Bernard says there are three in particular—respect for his presence, devotion or gratitude for his charity, confidence in his vigilance. No one can deny these obligations; but the greater number of men, even at the present day, never think of them. This is an additional reason why we should fulfill them carefully.

APPLICATION.—How can we fulfill them? We can and ought to testify—1st, our *respect*, by acting in his sight, especially when we are alone, as if we were in the company of some great person. The following thought will help us in doing so: “One day my angel will bear witness for or against me of what I am doing at this moment.” 2d. Our *devotion* or gratitude, by being very docile to his inspirations, and thanking him *every night* for what he has done for us. 3d. Our *confidence*, by consulting him and invoking him in all our doubts and wants, with the conviction it will never be done in vain.

COLLOQUY with your holy Guardian Angel.

TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD

1st *Prel.* Behold Jesus in glory on Mount Tabor.

2d *Prel.* Beg the grace of drawing fruit from meditating on this great mystery.

POINT I

MYSTERY OF THE TRANSFIGURATION

CONSIDERATION.—“Jesus taketh unto Him Peter and James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart. And He was transfigured before them. And His face did shine as the sun, and His garments became white as snow. And behold there appeared to them Moses and Elias, talking with Him. And Peter answering said to Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here; if Thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles, one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. And as he was yet speaking, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them. And lo, a voice out of the cloud saying, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him. And the disciples hearing, fell upon their face and were very much afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said to them, Arise, and fear not; and they, lifting up their eyes, saw no one, but only Jesus.” (St. Matt. 17: 1-8.)

APPLICATION.—Every detail of this great event is given to us; we might imagine we had seen it, for it is a picture rather than a history. Let us attentively contemplate this picture, considering one by one the *persons*, their *words*, and their *actions*. Beautiful thoughts and most practical lessons are contained in this contemplation. Let us not fear to devote too much time to them. If they occupied the whole of our meditation, it would be very useful for us.

AFFECTIONS.—"How lovely are Thy tabernacles, O Lord! Better is one day in Thy courts above thousands. I have chosen to be an abject in the house of my God rather than to dwell in the tabernacles of sinners." (Psalm 83:2, 11.)

RESOLUTIONS.—Should the method of meditation here pursued, that of considering *persons*, *words*, and *actions*, tend to increase my devotion, I will not neglect it in future.

POINT II

MOTIVES FOR THE TRANSFIGURATION

CONSIDERATION.—Eight days had passed away since Jesus foretold His passion and death to His Apostles; since He had openly declared that they also must be ready to forsake all things, even life itself, for His sake and the Gospel. Their Master's words had saddened the disciples, and awakened doubts that might weaken their faith; and to cure this, our Lord chose to give them at once a striking proof of His divinity, and a foretaste of the happiness prepared for them in heaven. Such was the principal reason for the Transfiguration.

APPLICATION.—This is how God is accustomed to act toward us; if He allows sad memories and alarming prospects to throw us into desolation, doubt, or dejection, He takes care to put an end to it by sending a ray of celestial glory before our eyes, which immediately sends away our darkness and our anguish, expands our hearts, and fills them with the sweetest confidence and joy.

AFFECTIONS.—Ask pardon for the distrust and infidelity to which you have given way in times of trial.

RESOLUTIONS.—To endeavor always to maintain peace of mind, and to keep perfect control over yourself.

POINT III

ST. PETER'S RAPTURE

CONSIDERATION.— When Peter, transported out of himself at the sight of the glorified humanity of Jesus, cried out, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; let us make three tabernacles," St. Mark tells us "*Non enim sciebat quid diceret*," "He knew not what he said," (St. Mark 9: 5,) because he did not understand the end our Lord had in view in manifesting His glory. Later on, he understood it as he explains to us in his second Epistle, chap. 1.

APPLICATION.— Let us enter to-day into the wishes of our loving Saviour; let us gather thoughts of courage and generosity from His glorious Transfiguration: let us say, "If a momentary glimpse of the glorified humanity of Jesus Christ can transport an apostle with joy and happiness, what will it be to contemplate Him eternally in heaven!" And in striving after this happiness, which is promised to us, we will cry out with St. Paul, "*Non sunt condignæ passiones hujus temporis ad futuram gloriam, quæ revelabitur in nobis*." "The sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come that shall be revealed in us." (Romans 8: 18.)

COLLOQUY with the three Apostles who witnessed the Transfiguration.

THE LUNATIC CHILD

POSSESSED BY A DEVIL

1st Prel. Behold the father of the lunatic kneeling at the feet of Jesus.

2d Prel. Ask for lively sentiments of faith, zeal, and compassion for the unfortunate.

POINT I

A LUNATIC CHILD WHOM THE APOSTLES COULD NOT CURE IS BROUGHT TO JESUS

CONSIDERATION.— Jesus came down from Mount Tabor, the day after the Transfiguration, “and coming to His disciples, He saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes disputing with them.” The subject of the dispute was the failure of an exorcism which the Apostles had attempted in the absence of their Master, as the Gospel tells us. “And He asked them, What do you question about among you? And one of the multitude answering said, Master, I have brought my son to Thee, having a dumb spirit, who, wheresoever he taketh him, dasheth him; and he foameth, and gnasheth with the teeth, and pineth away: and I spoke to Thy disciples to cast him out; and they could not.” (St. Mark 9: 13, 15–17.)

APPLICATION.— See here the cruelty and tyranny of the devil. God had allowed him to possess this child, and to ill-treat him from time to time. Then the devil tormented him *as often* as he could, *as much* as he could, and, had he been able, would have done so yet *more*. For as the Evangelist says, “Oftentimes hath he cast him into the fire, and into waters, to destroy him.” (St. Mark 9: 21.) What horror, then, should we have for Satan! And yet Christians give themselves up to him body and soul by committing mortal

sin! Yet religious too follow his treacherous suggestions by yielding to thoughts and desires of vainglory, ambition, envy, and sensuality! Have you been among the number?

AFFECTIONS.—"From the snares of the devil, O Lord! deliver us." (Litany.)

RESOLUTIONS.—To guard specially against the demons of pride and sensuality.

POINT II

JESUS REPROACHES THE APOSTLES, THE SCRIBES, AND THE PEOPLE

CONSIDERATION.—After having heard what had happened, the most gentle Jesus, seeing the multitude scandalized by the failure of which the scribes accused the Apostles, pronounced these words of bitter indignation, "O incredulous generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you?" (St. Mark 9: 18.)

APPLICATION.—Notice how differently our Saviour acted here from what He afterward did in His Passion. *Then*, no complaint escaped Him. *Now*, He complains bitterly. Ah! it is our little faith and our resistance to grace which make the sufferings He then endured with so much love to be of no avail. And you, too, have you never given Him cause to complain? Perhaps in many respects.

AFFECTIONS.—Ask pardon of our Lord for your want of faith and confidence. His word is pledged; He assures us that "Omnis qui petit accipit." "Every one that asketh receiveth," (St. Matt. 7: 8;) and from this no person is excepted.

RESOLUTIONS.—To resist courageously all temptations to distrust, which is no less offensive to God than injurious to those who yield to it under any pretense.

POINT III

WHY THE APOSTLES FAILED TO CURE THE LUNATIC

CONSIDERATION.— The reason is clearly shown in our Lord's answer to the Apostles when they asked, "Why could not we cast him out?" Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief. For amen I say to you, If you have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, you shall say to this mountain, Remove from hence thither, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible to you. But this kind is not cast out but by prayer and fasting." (St. Matt. 17: 18–20.)

APPLICATION.— Three things are here plainly taught us. 1st. That we who are called to work for the conversion of sinners, to deliver them from the tyranny of the devil, ought to have faith in a higher degree than the great body of the faithful. 2dly. That the greater our faith is, the more able shall we be to do great things for the glory of God and the salvation of our neighbor. 3dly. That in certain cases our faith, to be availing, must be accompanied by acts of corporal penance, which our Lord includes under the single word *fasting*. Have we been always thoroughly convinced of these truths? Does our conduct show that we have? What remains for us to do?

COLLOQUY with our Divine Saviour. Acknowledge that you deserve the reproach which He addressed to the disciples, yet weak in faith, and repeat the prayer which they uttered with one voice, "Domine, adauge nobis fidem." "Lord, increase our faith." (St. Luke 17: 5.)

THE CURE OF THE CHILD POSSESSED BY A DEVIL

1st Prel. Behold Jesus commanding the devil to go out of the child.

2d Prel. Ask for a lively horror of every thing which can admit the devil into your heart.

POINT I.

JESUS COMMANDS THE CHILD TO BE BROUGHT TO HIM

CONSIDERATION.—“*Natura Dei bonitas.*” “The nature of God is goodness,” says St. Leo. Jesus here gives a proof of it; for He bids the father, to whom He had just before addressed a well-merited rebuke, to bring his son. “And as he was coming to Him, the devil threw him down, and tore him.” (St. Luke 9: 42.)

APPLICATION.—Two things are here shown us. First, that God’s anger and indignation, which in the next world are eternal, but in this are temporary, often like heralds precede His mercy. As the prophet says, “*Cum iratus fueris, Domine, misericordiæ recordaberis.*” “When Thou art angry, Thou wilt remember mercy.” (Habacuc 3: 2.) So, too, the holy Job, “*Etiamsi occiderit me, in ipso sperabo.*” “Although He should kill me, I will trust in Him.” (Job 13: 15.) Our hope and our confidence should remain unshaken, even when God chastises us or seems to forsake us. Secondly, we see that it is especially when we make a firm resolution to free ourselves from sin or tepidity, that the devil redoubles his efforts to overthrow us, to make us desperate or disheartened. Beware lest you fall into this snare.

AFFECTIONS.—“In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped; let me never be confounded!” (Psalm 30: 1.)

RESOLUTIONS.—When fear takes possession of my soul, I will call to mind the admirable words of St.

Augustine, "If you fear God, cast yourself into His bosom."

POINT II

JESUS COMMANDS THE DEVIL TO GO OUT OF THE CHILD

CONSIDERATION.— Jesus, seeing the child rolling on the ground, and foaming before Him, "asked his father, How long time is it since this hath happened unto Him? But he said, From his infancy. But if Thou canst do any thing, help us, having compassion on us. And Jesus saith to him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." (St. Mark 9: 20–22.) The father saw at once that the doubt which he entertained of the power of Jesus stood in the way of the favor which he asked, and he "crying out with tears said, I do believe, Lord: help Thou my unbelief," (St. Mark 9: 23;) that is to say, "I do believe as far as I can: of Thy mercy supply what is lacking to my faith; help me to believe as I ought."

APPLICATION.— Imitate this suppliant father. Begin by doing what you can, and ask God to do the rest; then await the answer and the final result. It is a blessed truth which St. Augustine so beautifully expresses in those words which the Council of Trent has literally adopted: "*Deus impossibilia non jubet; sed jubendo monet facere quod possis, et petere quod non possis, et adjuvat ut possis.*" "God does not demand of us impossible things; but by His demands He means us to do our utmost, to ask for what we can not do, and He helps us to do it." Have we done this? Have we not contented ourselves with simply asking, and making no effort? or presuming on our strength, have we not neglected to pray?

AFFECTIONS.— I believe, O Lord! that I can do all things through faith and prayer; but my faith is im-

perfect, grant that it may increase. "Credo, Domine: adjuva incredulitatem meam." "I believe, Lord: help Thou my unbelief."

RESOLUTIONS.— Frequently to recite this prayer.

POINT III

JESUS GIVES BACK THE CHILD PERFECTLY CURED TO THE FATHER

CONSIDERATION.— The father's faith, now made perfect, is rewarded. "Jesus," says St. Mark, "threatened the unclean spirit, saying to him, Deaf and dumb spirit, I command thee, go out of him; and enter not any more into him." The devil obeyed, but in the manner of a devil. "And crying out, and greatly tearing him, he went out of him, and he became as dead, so that many said, He is dead. But Jesus, taking him by the hand, lifted him up; and he arose." (St. Mark 9: 24-26.) "And Jesus restored him to his father. And all were astonished at the mighty power of God." (St. Luke 9: 43, 44.)

APPLICATION.— We have presented to us here a picture of the violent disturbance into which the devil throws a soul that he is compelled to leave. It is a kind of agony, but an agony through which a soul passes from death to life, from habitual tepidity to fervor, to the full vigor of the spiritual life. Perhaps you know something of it by experience. However that may be, learn from this example how to direct and encourage the souls committed to your care.

COLLOQUY with our Divine Saviour.

THE JOURNEY FROM MOUNT TABOR TO CAPHARNAUM

THE PASSION REPEATEDLY FORETOLD

1st Prel. Picture to yourself Jesus, on His way, conversing alone with His Apostles.

2d Prel. Ask for grace to understand, reverence, and love spiritual things.

POINT I

JESUS FORETELLS HIS PASSION A SECOND TIME

CONSIDERATION.—It was the month of August, in the third year of the preaching of Jesus. Hitherto His ministry had scarcely extended beyond the bounds of Galilee. Now Judea was to be the scene of His labors. But before going there, He wished to pay one last visit to Capharnaum, where He had lived so much. On the way from Mount Tabor to this city He permitted no one to accompany Him except His Apostles, that He might talk to them of the great mystery, of the insults and the cruel death which He was about to suffer in the capital of Judea. “He said to them, The Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of men, and they shall kill Him; and after that He is killed, He shall rise again the third day.” (St. Mark 9: 30.)

APPLICATION.—In the first place, mark *when it was* that our Lord reminded Himself and others of His Passion. It was when all smiled upon Him; when the fame of His miracles had won for Him a general popularity. When success attends us, when men praise us, let us not yield to thoughts or words of vanity, but rather let us strive to be humble. Let us remember that we are unprofitable servants, doomed to wither, to die; uncertain, too, whether we merit love or wrath. Have you done this? In the second place, mark *why*

it was that Jesus so often foretold His approaching Passion. It was to make His apostles understand that He would suffer of His own free-will, and out of love for man, and to prevent them from being scandalized when the time came. Do good, so that what you do may prove to be good under any circumstances.

AFFECTIONS.—Praise, glory, and thanksgiving to Jesus, our merciful Saviour.

RESOLUTIONS.—To humble yourself on all occasions before God.

POINT II

JESUS IS NOT UNDERSTOOD BY HIS APOSTLES

CONSIDERATION.—“But they understood not this word,” says St. Luke; “and it was hid from them, so that they perceived it not.” In truth, they understood the expressions, “to be delivered up,” “to be put to death,” which were plain enough; but they could not understand their meaning, because their love for Jesus and their own ambitious views made them reject the literal sense of the words. “And they were afraid to ask Him concerning this word,” (St. Luke 9:45;) afraid, doubtless, of learning more than they wished to know. “And they were troubled exceedingly.” (St. Matt. 17:22.)

APPLICATION.—Can you see in this no point of resemblance between yourself and the Apostles, who were still so imperfect? How many things, for instance, are told you again and again by your superiors, by your director—things which you do not understand because you do not wish to understand them, because they cross your inclination, because they urge you to painful efforts. For example, this excessive liberty in which you indulge your eyes or your tongue is a lamentable occasion of sin. Until you totally renounce these undue familiarities, you will have neither

peace nor purity of conscience. Have not your want of diligence and care made you responsible for the sins of others? Have not your judgments, your complaints, your irregularities given grave scandal to your brethren?

AFFECTIONS.— Pray that you may be enlightened, moved, and converted.

RESOLUTIONS.— Never to follow the example of those who avoid consulting their confessor with regard to their doubts, through fear that their false security may be disturbed, or that they may be called on to make some sacrifice, some great effort, and who thus deprive themselves of the greatest of earthly blessings, peace of mind.

POINT III

JESUS FORETELLS HIS RESURRECTION AS WELL AS HIS DEATH

CONSIDERATION.—“The Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of men, and they shall kill Him; and after that He is killed, He shall rise again the third day.” It is important to notice here that Jesus Christ never separates the prediction of His glorious Resurrection from that of His Passion.

APPLICATION.— He does this for our encouragement, that the thought of our resurrection and the joys of heaven which are promised us may support us in the spiritual combat, in every imaginable sacrifice and suffering. Quicken your faith; summon up your courage.

COLLOQUY with your holy Patron.

THE TRIBUTE OF THE TWO DRACHMAS

1st Prel. Behold St. Peter pulling up the fish in which he will find the money required to pay the tax.

2d Prel. Ask for St. Peter's simplicity, humility, and faith.

POINT I

JESUS WAS EXEMPT FROM PAYING THE TRIBUTE

CONSIDERATION.—The Gospel only mentions one act of our Lord in this His last visit to Capharnaum. "And when they were come to Capharnaum, they that received the didrachma came to Peter, and said to him, Doth not your Master pay the didrachma? He said, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What is thy opinion, Simon? The kings of the earth, of whom do they receive tribute or custom? of their own children, or of strangers? And he said, Of strangers. Jesus said to him, Then the children are free." (St. Matt. 17:23-25.) "Still more," He would say, "is the only-begotten Son of the King of heaven free." Undoubtedly this title exempted the Saviour from all tribute to earthly kings. His exemption rested on good grounds.

APPLICATION.—Do the dispensations which we claim from rule, from work, from penance, always rest upon grounds equally good? Of a truth, there is no lack of excuses. Our age, our health, our business, or else our seniority, our merit, our great services. But are not self-deception, self-love, idleness, tepidity, too often at the root of it all? The more we naturally crave for dispensations, the more rigidly should we scrutinize our motives.

AFFECTIONS.—Excite in your heart, and pray that you may acquire great love and esteem for the ordinary

community life, and for the regularity and perseverance which it demands.

RESOLUTIONS.— Avoid, as far as possible, seeking dispensations, and exemption from rules.

POINT II

JESUS PAYS THE TRIBUTE

CONSIDERATION.— Though Jesus need not have paid the tribute, yet He did pay it, to avoid giving scandal to the people, to whom his right of exemption or his nature as Son of God were not yet fully known. But He paid it, so to speak, as God, by a striking and singular miracle. He said, then, to Peter, “Go to the sea, and cast in a hook; and that fish which shall first come up, take; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a stater; take that, and give it to them for Me and thee.” (St. Matt. 17: 26.) By this command He severely tested the Apostle’s obedience. It stood the trial, and gained the reward.

APPLICATION.— Learn from this, 1st. Never to put a stumbling-block in your brother’s way, even though in so doing you commit no sin yourself. 2d. Not to ask yourself, when an opportunity of doing good is presented to you, “Am I obliged to do this?” This would be a bad return for the generosity which God daily shows to you. 3d. Not to criticize, but to adore in all humility, the wonderful ways in which God sometimes pleases to work out His good pleasure. 4th. Blind obedience.

AFFECTIONS.— Pray that your conduct may correspond on all occasions with these precepts of Christian perfection.

RESOLUTIONS.— To make constant efforts to attain this perfection.

POINT III

JESUS PAYS FOR ST. PETER AS WELL AS FOR HIMSELF

CONSIDERATION.—"Take that, and give it to them for Me and for thee." The tribute was demanded of Jesus alone as Head of the College of Apostles. Notwithstanding, He wished Peter to pay it too. Why did He make this distinction, which in some degree raised the Apostle to the level of his Master? Commentators tell us that it signified to Peter the confirmation of the primacy which had already been given him. This fresh proof of love which our Lord gave to St. Peter was the reward of his faith and obedience.

APPLICATION.—Strive to deserve the love of our Divine Master and Saviour. Congratulate St. Peter on the exalted rank to which he was raised. Do we rejoice at this? It was for our welfare that this was done. It is to the supremacy of St. Peter and of his successors that we owe the unbroken unity of the faith, and the pledges of eternal happiness which that faith gives us. Do we think enough of all this?

COLLOQUY with the Saint whose name we received in baptism.

THE APOSTLES DISPUTE

AS TO WHICH OF THEM SHALL BE THE GREATEST

1st Prel. Consider our Lord saying, "If any man desire to be first, he shall be the last of all, and the minister of all." (St. Mark 9: 34.)

2d Prel. Ask for grace to become little in your own eyes.

POINT I

THE AMBITION OF THE APOSTLES

CONSIDERATION.—The marks of honor and distinction which the Saviour had given to St. Peter aroused the jealousy of the other Apostles. They fell into a dispute when their Master had left them for a moment to speak with Peter. But Jesus, who, as St. Luke tells us, "saw their thoughts," wished to correct them, and asked them, "What did you treat of in the way?" "At illi tacebant: siquidem in via disputaverant, quis eorum major esset." "But they held their peace; for in the way they had disputed among themselves which of them should be the greatest." (St. Mark 9: 32, 33.)

APPLICATION.—You are horrified at the conduct of the Apostles. "What!" you say; "their Master had just been telling them of the cruel death He was about to suffer; but did it make no impression on them? Were they so selfish as to have no thought for Him, but only for their own miserable ambition?" Your indignation is natural; but perhaps you would judge them more leniently if you thought of the weakness of human nature, and especially of your own. Have you not often given way to thoughts of ambition and vainglory after meditating on the humiliations of Our Blessed Lord? or knelt humbly in the confessional,

and then immediately afterward lost your temper because some one made a harmless joke at your expense? Perhaps even in the confessional itself you took offense at the penance enjoined upon you.

AFFECTIONS.— Acknowledge your faults. Regret and repent of them.

RESOLUTIONS.— To be on your guard against your own pride, and excuse the failings of others.

POINT II

THE APOSTLES TAUGHT TO BE HUMBLE

CONSIDERATION.— Ambition, like every other passion, is ingenious in concealing the end at which it is aiming. We see a proof of this in the case of the Apostles. They came to Jesus and asked a general question, without appearing to refer to themselves. "Who, thinkest Thou, is the greater in the kingdom in heaven?" (St. Matt. 18: 1.) Jesus, who knew their motive for asking Him, not wishing to rebuke them too severely, said, "If any man desire to be first, he shall be the last of all, and the minister of all."

APPLICATION.— We all wish to be great in the sight of God — great in heaven. Jesus Christ here shows us how to become so: by making ourselves little, the least of all, in our own eyes. Would you know if, by God's grace, you have attained to this? Can you bear to be overlooked, to be passed by as something beneath notice, and yet not lose your peace and joy of heart? Are you glad when the lowest office, the meanest work is allotted to you — when, in fact, you are made, as Jesus says, "the minister of all"?

AFFECTIONS.— Pray for grace to advance in the practice of humility and self-denial.

RESOLUTIONS.— When humbled before men, to rejoice in the sight of God.

POINT III

THE APOSTLES ARE BID TO BECOME AS LITTLE CHILDREN

CONSIDERATION.— The Apostles, engrossed as they were in thoughts of earthly greatness, could understand but little of the abnegation and humility which Jesus taught them. To set it before them more clearly and plainly, He “calling unto Him a little child, set him in the midst of them, and said, Amen, I say to you, unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Who-soever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greater in the kingdom of heaven.” (St. Matt. 18: 2-4.)

APPLICATION.— To please God, we must have a share of His special grace and love, by which we obtain this childhood of the spirit, and become in virtue what children are in nature — pure, simple, humble, gentle, obedient. This is not easy. We shall not become so without generous and persevering efforts. Are we making such efforts? What success have we had hitherto?

COLLOQUY with Jesus, our Divine Model, who, having become for us a little Infant, wrapped in swaddling-clothes and cradled in a manger, spent thirty years in the obscure retirement of Nazareth, taking part in the humble and fatiguing labors of His adopted father. Beg of Him to forgive our ambitious thoughts and designs, and offer Him our generous resolutions.

FEAST OF THE NATIVITY

OF OUR BLESSED LADY

1st Prel. Unite yourself in spirit to the angels who surround the cradle of Mary.

2d Prel. Ask for grace to grow in knowledge, love and devotion to our Lady.

POINT I

THE NATIVITY OF MARY THE SUBJECT OF OUR JOY

CONSIDERATION.— One of the brightest days in the history of the world is the birthday of her who was to change the face of the earth, and bring blessings to it instead of the curse under which it lay. She it was who was promised to our first parents when they repented of their sin, as the only hope of salvation for themselves and their posterity; she it was who was to bring into the world the Saviour so long desired. This great, this glorious day we now commemorate; to-day we celebrate the birth of the Virgin-Mother Mary. The Church invites us to celebrate it with a great joy, a great solemnity. “Cum jucunditate nativitatem beatæ Mariæ solemniter celebremus.” Because her birth has been a cause of joy and blessing to the whole universe—to the angels in heaven, whose queen she was to be—to the holy souls, whose liberator she would become—to the whole race of Adam, whose restorer and mother she would prove. “Nativitas tua, Dei Genitrix, gaudium annuntiavit universo mundo.”

APPLICATION.— How can we best comply with the invitation of the Church to rejoice as Mary would have us to do? *1st.* By saluting her as the Dawn of the Sun of Justice—as Our Queen, Our Deliverer, Our Mother, wishing ever to be in the number of her

most devoted subjects, her most loving children. 2d. By congratulating her on the extraordinary favors, both natural and supernatural, which God lavished upon her from the moment of her birth — favors far higher than any which the greatest saints will ever receive. 3d. By promising to do our utmost to spread the devotion to her, and to imitate the purity and holiness of her life.

AFFECTIONS.—“Causa nostræ lætitiæ, ora pro nobis.” “Holy Mary, cause of our joy, pray for us.” (Litany.)

RESOLUTIONS.—During this day, to manifest our joy in the manner specified above.

POINT II

THE BIRTH OF MARY THE GROUND OF OUR HOPE

CONSIDERATION.—The subjects of a good queen always celebrate with joy the anniversary of her birth. They expect to see this day marked by some especial favors, by some unusual bounty; and they are rarely disappointed. But the resources of earthly potentates are limited; so too must be their gifts and favors; they can not satisfy every one. Not so with Mary. Jesus has appointed her to be the dispenser of the *infinite* merits of His death and passion. Mary can draw upon this treasure without fear of exhausting it; she can give, then, without stint if she please; and we know that she does so please, for she is our most tender, loving Mother. What may we not hope from her to-day?

APPLICATION.—Go to her to-day with entire confidence. Ask for much — much for yourself, much for others, for your friends, for the order or congregation to which you belong, for all intrusted to your care,

for the whole Church, for the nine hundred million inhabitants of the world — that all may be united in the same faith, may become one family, one Church — that there may be in reality but one fold and one shepherd. Why do the feasts of our dearest Mother so often pass unmarked by any signal favor? Because we ask for so little, because we pray with so little heart. Let it not be so with you to-day.

COLLOQUY with the most Holy Virgin. Paraphrase the "Salve Regina," "Hail, O Queen, Mother of Mercy!" etc.

JESUS WARNS HIS DISCIPLES AGAINST SCANDALS

1st Prel. Think of Jesus saying, "Wo to the world because of scandal." (St. Matt. 18:7.)

2d Prel. Ask for a great fear of giving scandal, and grace to avoid it.

POINT I

SCANDAL IN THE WORLD

CONSIDERATION.—The sweet innocence of the little child which Jesus had set in the midst of the Apostles as their pattern and exemplar caused Him to denounce those who scandalize others, and especially those who scandalize children. Listen to His words: "He that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea. Wo to the world because of scandals. For it must needs be"—He knew the corruption of the world—"that scandals come; but nevertheless wo to that man by whom scandal cometh." (St. Matt. 18:6, 7.)

APPLICATION.—You would share our Lord's indignation against scandal, and those who give it, and you would feel that horror of it which He wishes you to feel, if you reflected on the malice and dreadful consequences of this sin. "Supra modum peccans peccatum." "Sinful above measure." (Romans 7:13.) The fathers, too, speak in terms equally severe of those who give scandal: they call them emissaries and missionaries of the devil; devils incarnate, because they lead others into sin as much or even more than the devil does himself; assassins of the soul, a thousand-fold more guilty than murderers of the body; anti-Christ, undoing the work of Christ; a living plague,

spreading everywhere infection and death. In all the years that you have lived in the world, have you never given scandal or been scandalized yourself?

AFFECTIONS.—Thank God that you have been preserved from the fatal influence of scandal, that you have not, like so many others, fallen a victim to it for a miserable eternity. Pray for those who have been perverted through scandal.

RESOLUTIONS.—To excite yourself to renewed zeal and fervor, in order to atone to our Lord for the losses caused by scandal.

POINT II

SCANDAL IN THE CLOISTER

CONSIDERATION.—When our Lord said so sorrowfully, “Wo to the world because of scandals,” did He not think also of religious communities? Is scandal impossible, is it unknown there? Alas! no; for the simple reason that members of such communities are naturally prone to become lax, and so set a bad example. And this of itself is sufficient to commit the sin of scandal. You may not have a direct intention of leading others into sin, but if (as St. Thomas says) either by word, act, or omission, you become an occasion of sin to another, you are guilty of scandal. A superior, for instance, commits it, if through negligence or weakness he fails to correct abuses which have crept in; for he is the cause of the laxity and disorders which follow, and become permanent and irremediable. A religious commits it, who, having more or less influence, openly and habitually infringes certain points of the rule or discipline, since others will soon follow him and become as lax as he is; he commits it, who, by his captious criticisms and discontented murmurings, weakens in his brethren the principles of authority

and religious obedience; he commits it, who, by his way of ridiculing his superiors, or the practices of humility, mortification, penance, and devotion customary in his convent, causes the want of seriousness in everything, and the total loss of all proper respect.

APPLICATION.— See if you have not been, in some way, guilty of scandal. If you have, ask pardon for it; do your utmost to repair the mischief you have done. On the other hand, never let a bad example influence you or turn you aside. Follow rather the blessed Berchmanns, who drew good out of evil by redoubling his efforts to avoid the sins which he saw in others.

COLLOQUY with your holy Angel. Beg of him to preserve you from seduction.

OUR LORD'S DIRECTIONS

FOR CORRECTION AND PARDON

1st Prel. Picture to yourself Jesus surrounded by His Apostles.
2d Prel. Ask for the spirit of discernment and charity.

POINT I

RULES FOR CORRECTION

CONSIDERATION.— Our Lord talked to His Apostles the whole way from Capharnaum to Jerusalem. He feared lest His denunciation of scandal-givers should lead the Apostles to hate them. To remedy this, He showed how His law was emphatically a law of love; that we ought to pity and pray for those who are a cause of offense to us rather than to hate them; that we should do all in our power to bring them to a better mind, especially by a brotherly rebuke. He thought this of so much importance that He gave them detailed directions concerning it: "If thy brother shall offend against thee, go, and rebuke him between thee and him alone. If he shall hear thee, thou shalt gain thy brother. And if he will not hear thee, take with thee one or two more: that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may stand. And if he will not hear them, tell the Church; and if he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican." (St. Matt. 18: 15-17.)

APPLICATION.— Our Lord would seem here to point out the way in which the shepherds of the flock should deal with those who trouble it, especially with innovators and dogmatizers. They should first reprove them in private for their errors or scandals; if this fails, they should reprove them before witnesses, and even

denounce them; if they still continue obstinate, they should be condemned or excommunicated by a solemn sentence. Praise and magnify the wisdom of this rule, which for eighteen centuries has preserved unbroken the faith and unity of the Church. Consider it now in reference to religious, who are especially subject to brotherly reproof. If you see a brother going astray, or committing any fault which could scandalize or mislead the others, tell him his fault privately; if he will not listen to you, do it before a third person; if you see that your remonstrances are *wholly ineffectual*, lay the case before the superior. This is the method traced out for you by Jesus Christ. Have you adopted it? Have you not, on the contrary, failed in your duty either through indifference, or by contenting yourself with despising your brother, making no effort to correct him? or by publishing secret faults to those who have no authority in the matter, or by exaggerating them through anger? And when you have been personally offended, have you not been unwilling or refused to make the first advance? Or, if you are in a position of authority over the rest of the community, over pupils or servants, have you not reproved them *in public* without real necessity, without tact; or *in private* with heat and sharpness? These are points for self-examination before God.

AFFECTIONS.—Pray for the spirit of discernment, prudence, and charity.

RESOLUTIONS.—To pray before reproofing, and to invoke the guardian angel of the person to be reprimanded.

POINT II

RULES FOR FORGIVENESS

CONSIDERATION.—How often should we forgive? How should we forgive? The Apostles seemed to

think that our Lord had not been sufficiently clear upon these points. Peter, speaking in the name of the rest, asked, "Lord, how often shall my brother offend against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times? Jesus saith to him, I say not to thee, till seven times: but till seventy times seven." (St. Matt. 18: 21, 22.) That is to say, always; and always from the bottom of your heart. "Ex cordibus vestris."

APPLICATION.—If we carry out our Lord's directions, we shall only be doing to our brother what He Himself does to us through the instrumentality of His minister in the confessional. We present ourselves there so often, and so often to accuse ourselves of the same faults; and yet He has always forgiven us, and is always ready to do so again, if He sees that we are humble and contrite, and that unreservedly.

In the Colloquy which we are about to make with Him, let us bless and magnify His inexhaustible goodness, patience, and generosity; blushing at our own unwillingness to forgive the little wrongs that we have received—we, who have wronged Him so terribly; thinking with shame of the pardons we have granted, and then wholly or in part withdrawn, by bringing up again and resenting old offenses. Promise to do better. Ask for grace to help you.

COLLOQUY with your divine and merciful Lord.

PARABLE OF THE UNMERCIFUL SERVANT

1st Prel. Picture to yourself Jesus uttering this parable.

2d Prel. Ask for grace to gain great benefit from this Meditation.

POINT I

THE MERCY AND GENEROSITY OF THE KING

CONSIDERATION.—What our Lord had said of the necessity of forgiving, and the gross injustice of those who refuse to do so, was plain enough. But He wished to bring it home to them still further by a parable. “Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened to a king * who would take an account of his servants. And when he had begun to take the account, one was brought to him that owed him ten thousand talents. And as he had not wherewith to pay it, his lord commanded that he should be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. But that servant falling down, besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And the lord of that servant, being moved with pity, let him go, and forgave him the debt.” (St. Matt. 18: 23–27.)

APPLICATION.—*1st.* This king, who so unexpectedly took account with his servants represents to us the King of kings, who will take account with you at the moment, always so uncertain, of your death. Are you ready to give it? *2dly.* In this immense debt of ten thousand talents, you see to what a sum, in God’s estimation, the sins, the faults of every day amount. Do

* In expressing Himself thus, our Lord describes to us the manner in which His Heavenly Father governs the world. As if He had said, Behold how God, who is the Sovereign of the universe, behaves toward man who is His creature and His subject.

you think of this? Instead of trying to reduce your debt by the many ways in your power, are you not continually increasing it? On the other hand, in the readiness of the king to forgive the enormous debt of his faithless servant, you see how easy it is to move your Judge, and discharge your debts now in this world. How foolish to keep them for the next, for purgatory!

AFFECTIONS.— Acts of faith in the foregoing truths.

RESOLUTIONS.— To do all in our power to acquit ourselves of our debt toward God.

POINT II

THE HARD-HEARTEDNESS AND COVETOUSNESS OF THE SERVANT

CONSIDERATION.—" But when that servant was gone out " from the presence of his master, who had shown himself so tender and generous, " he found one of his fellow-servants that owed him an hundred pence; and laying hold of him, he throttled him, saying, Pay what thou owest. And his fellow-servant, falling down, besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not; but went and cast him into prison till he paid the debt." (St. Matt. 18: 28-30.)

APPLICATION.— Our Lord evidently wishes to show us how unjust and ungrateful we should be if, after the pardon of our many and great offenses, we show any unwillingness to forgive those who have injured us. Yet have we nothing to reproach ourselves with in this? Are we not of those who always nourish some ill-will against those who have injured, ridiculed, or humbled us, who avoid their presence, or are cool and distant toward them? Do we not expect others to

look over, or put up with, everything from us, while we make no allowance for their feelings?

AFFECTIONS.—Humble yourself before God, and ask His pardon.

RESOLUTIONS.—To be severe toward ourselves, and indulgent and tolerant with regard to others.

POINT III

APPLICATION OF THE PARABLE

CONSIDERATION.—"Then his lord," informed of his servant's conduct, "called him, and said to him, Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all the debt, because thou besoughtest me; shouldst not thou then have had compassion also on thy fellow-servant, even as I had compassion on thee? And his lord, being angry, delivered him to the torturers until he paid all the debt. So also shall My Heavenly Father do to you, if you forgive not every one his brother from your hearts." (St. Matt. 18: 32-35.)

APPLICATION.—Let these last words sink deeply into your heart. They will silence, when the time of trial comes, the voice of anger, indignation, and revenge.

COLLOQUY with your divine and merciful Saviour. Thank Him for having inspired you, when removed from Him by sin, with sentiments at once of salutary fear and of great confidence, thus leading you back into the right path. Beg of Him to preserve you from the seduction of bad example. Promise that you will not nourish resentment against those who may hereafter offend you.

INCIDENTS IN OUR LORD'S JOURNEY

THROUGH GALILEE

1st Prel. Picture to yourself our Lord as He walked with the disciples.

2d Prel. Ask for grace to be imbued with the mind and spirit of Jesus.

POINT I

JESUS IS PRESSED TO HASTEN TOWARD JERUSALEM

CONSIDERATION.—The Gospel records several remarkable occurrences in the journey which our Lord made by short stages from Capharnaum to Jerusalem. First of all, several of His relatives (nephews of St. Joseph) joined Him on the way, and begged Him to make more speed, so as to reach Jerusalem the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles, which was the 15th of the seventh month, that is, September. They hoped He would work some great miracles, which would reflect some credit upon them, (“*Manifesta teipsum mundo.*” “Manifest Thyself to the world,”) in the capital—“that Thy disciples also may see Thy works which Thou doest.” Jesus answered, “Go you up to this festival-day, but I go not up to this festival-day.” (St. John 7: 3, 8.) He delayed His arrival until the third day of the feast, because of a plot against His life which was to have been put in execution on the first.

APPLICATION.—“Manifest thyself to the world;” make yourself a name; strive to be honored, praised, admired. So whispers the innate pride of our hearts. How often have we acted upon the suggestion! How many merits we have lost by doing so! Do you doubt it? Lay your hand upon your heart, and tell me if you do not prefer the society of the rich to that of the

poor; if you would not rather fill an important post than a lower one; if you would not rather preach to the noble and the learned than to the uneducated and the poor; if your main object in life is not rather to please man than God.

AFFECTIONS.—Desire to comprehend fully that nothing is great or estimable in the sight of God, but that which is done from the pure motive of pleasing Him.

RESOLUTIONS.—To make this indisputable truth the rule of your conduct. To reject promptly, by an act of humility, every thought and desire of vain-glory.

POINT II

A SAMARITAN VILLAGE REFUSES TO RECEIVE JESUS

CONSIDERATION.—At one place on our Lord's journey through Samaria, the inhabitants refuse to receive Him on account of the ancient enmity between themselves and the Jews. "And when His disciples James and John had seen this, they said, Lord, wilt Thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them? And turning, He rebuked them, saying, You know not of what spirit you are. The Son of Man came not to destroy souls, but to save." (St. Luke 9: 54-56.)

APPLICATION.—In these words our Saviour warns us against a spirit of bitterness or cruelty under the name of zeal. We are all prone to this; but we are mistaken if we think it can be pleasing to God. We deceive ourselves when we ask God to punish the wicked or persecutors without delay. Such is not the spirit of Jesus Christ, who came not to destroy, but to save; who bids us pray for our persecutors; who Himself prayed for them on the cross; who (as St.

Peter tells us) "*patienter agit propter vos, nolens aliquos perire, sed omnes ad poenitentiam reverti,*" "*dealeth patiently, not willing that any should perish, but that all should return to repentance.*" (II. St. Peter 3:9.)

AFFECTIONS.—Ask of God, on behalf of sinners, not miracles of vengeance, but miracles of conversion.

RESOLUTIONS.—To pray often for sinners, never despairing of their conversion.

POINT III

ANOTHER TOWN WELCOMED THE SAVIOUR

CONSIDERATION.—When our Lord was repulsed from the city whose hospitality He had deigned to ask, He made no complaint, but "*went into another town,*" "*et abierunt in aliud castellum.*" (St. Luke 9:56.)

APPLICATION.—Happy citizens! What favors will your Divine Guest not show you! O Jesus! deign to take possession of my heart, to come in and dwell there; make it all your own, your very own. May that blessed promise be fulfilled in me, "*If any one love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make our abode with him.*" (St. John 14:23.)

COLLOQUY.—O Jesus! take possession of my heart, and establish therein Thy dwelling-place. May it be all Thine, and Thine alone. Grant that in me may be accomplished Thy magnificent promise, "*If any one love Me, . . . My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make our abode with him.*"

OTHER EVENTS OF OUR LORD'S JOURNEY:

HEALING OF THE TEN LEPERS

1st Prel. Hear Jesus saying to the lepers, "Go, shew yourselves to the priests." (St. Luke 17: 14.)

2d Prel. Ask for grace to keep your soul free from the leprosy of sin.

POINT I

THE PRAYER OF THE LEPERS

CONSIDERATION.— As Jesus "entered into a certain town, there met Him ten men that were lepers, who stood afar off, and lifted up their voice, saying, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." (St. Luke 17: 12, 13.) What is the character of this prayer? It is *humble* and *respectful*: conscious of their loathsome appearance, these lepers would not come near Him. It is *confident*: they believed He could cure them where they stood, without any natural remedy. It is *fervent*: their whole heart was in their cry for help. It is *touching*: they appeal to Him both as their Saviour and their master. It is *charitable*: they ask, not each for himself alone, but for one another, uniting their interests.

APPLICATION.— Do your prayers possess these characteristics? They will always be heard if they do. Does it seem difficult to pray like this? Have you less need to pray than these poor lepers had? Has not the leprosy of sin made your soul more miserable, more hideous in the sight of God?

AFFECTIONS.— I will ask for the gift of prayer.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will strive during this day to be especially attentive at prayer.

POINT II

THE OBEDIENCE OF THE LEPERS

CONSIDERATION.—“Whom when He saw, He said, Go, shew yourselves to the priests.” * This command supposed that the leprosy would disappear before they presented themselves to the priests. But they had no assurance, no promise that this would be the case. They might naturally have demurred, or at least have asked for some explanation. But they did neither; they obeyed blindly; and they had not been long on the road before their obedience was rewarded: “And it came to pass as they went they were made clean.” (St. Luke 17: 14.)

APPLICATION.—Here is a beautiful example of obedience, and a striking proof of the merit and efficacy of *blind obedience*. Blind, because it shuts our eyes to the character of our lawful superior—to the reasons of his commands, to the difficulties of executing them—that we may see God alone, in whose name he acts. How precious in the sight of God is this obedience, which the world calls folly! Precious, because in it man sacrifices to God his noblest faculties, the light of his understanding. God has always rewarded it magnificently; often even by miracles. We have a proof of it here. Have you always esteemed *blind* obedience as you ought? Have you practiced it?

AFFECTIONS.—Let us pray earnestly for the gift of that lively faith which is essential to blind obedience.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will accustom myself to look upon my superior, not as a mere human being, subject to all the miseries of our nature, but as one holding the place of God.

* All lepers were excluded from the society of their fellow-men until their perfect cure had been legally certified by the priests.

POINT III

INGRATITUDE OF THE LEPERS

CONSIDERATION.—Of the ten lepers which were cured, only one proved grateful. “And one of them, when he saw that he was made clean, went back, with a loud voice glorifying God. And he fell on his face before His feet, giving thanks: and this was a Samaritan.” The rest made no other return for the benefit they had received than neglect and ingratitude. “And Jesus answering said, Were not ten made clean? and where are the nine? There is no one found to return and give glory to God but this stranger. And He said to him, Arise, go thy way; for thy faith hath made thee whole.” (St. Luke 17: 15–19.)

APPLICATION.—We see here how our Lord regards ingratitude and thankfulness, and how careful we should be to make continual acts of thanksgiving to God. “*Gratias agentes semper.*” Do we not often fail to do this? Some danger threatens us — a pestilence, perhaps; we pray to be preserved from it; it passes, and we give no thanks for our deliverance. When we recover from a sickness, we thank God; but when He gives us a much greater favor — uninterrupted health — do we thank Him then? Every day we say grace after meals; how often do we say it from the heart?

COLLOQUY with our good angel.

ON CONFESSION

1st Prel. Hear Jesus saying, "Go, shew yourselves to the priests."

2d Prel. Ask for grace to always make good confessions.

POINT I

PREPARATION FOR CONFESSION

CONSIDERATION.—The Fathers tell us that leprosy is a type of sin, which pollutes the soul in the sight of God. By the command which our Lord gave to the lepers to show themselves to the priests, He would have us understand that we also must have recourse to the priest in the Sacrament of Penance. Let us consider now the great blessings contained in this sacrament, and what we ought to do to approach it worthily. First of all, the *preparation*. It should be serious and careful, but not scrupulous. There are some pious people to whom confession is torture. They weary themselves beyond measure in making their examination of conscience and act of contrition. They never think they have done enough under either head. This is a defect; but there is another defect which religious have much more reason to guard against; and that is, treating confession as a matter of routine, thinking that as everything is included in the ordinary formula of accusation, an examination of conscience is unnecessary. So, too, with regard to their act of contrition: they never think of asking God for grace to make it well. What sort of confession would be likely to follow such a preparation as this?

APPLICATION.—*1st.* Have a particular day and particular hour for confession, and keep to it, otherwise you will constantly put it off. *2d.* On the morning of the day hear Mass with the intention to obtain the

grace of perfect contrition. At the Consecration, renew your intention, and excite in your heart a sorrow for your sins. You can make your examination of conscience during the first part of Mass. If you do this, all that you will require afterward is a few moments of preparation immediately before you enter the confessional.

AFFECTIONS.— Repent of your past faults, and ask pardon of them.

RESOLUTIONS.— Before confession, I will reflect seriously on that which I am about to do. I will adhere faithfully to the rules laid down above, and to any practices of which my own experience may have shown me the utility.

POINT II

ON SELF-ACCUSATION

CONSIDERATION.— We all know that this should be humble and sincere, or entire. In some cases, it may be more difficult for religious to be sincere than for those who can choose their own confessor; but they must remember that no fall, however grave it may be, could ever surprise a confessor; and this will help them to overcome their false shame, which is the cause of so many sacrileges. We know too that the object of frequent confession is to become more and more perfect. To accomplish this, it is much better to confine the accusation of ourselves to certain principal faults than to mention an infinity of defects and natural infirmities, for which it is hard to have a true contrition; otherwise our confessions will be vague and unprofitable.

APPLICATION.— Method to adopt: 1st. If you have a grave sin upon your conscience, confess that *first*; for if you begin with lesser faults, your courage may

fail you. 2d. Confine your *explicit* accusation to two or three principal faults, intending to cure yourself of *one in particular*. In this way you will get rid of them all in succession. 3d. When, in addition, you mention some sin of your past life, try to feel as great compunction for it as if you confessed it then for the first time. This is the easiest way to insure contrition.

AFFECTIONS.—Humble yourself before God in consideration of your great imperfection, notwithstanding the numerous confessions you have made.

RESOLUTIONS.—To ask according to the rules just laid down.

POINT III

THANKSGIVING

CONSIDERATION.—In order to obtain the best results from frequent confession, it is important — 1st, to make an act of faith in the efficacy of the sacrament; 2d, to renew your intention; 3d, to ask for grace to be faithful to it.

APPLICATION.—To do this, say, “I believe, my Jesus, that Your blood, through this sacrament, has flowed over my soul; that You have purified it, and adorned it with fresh gifts. I thank You, and I renew my resolution not to commit again this sin especially. I will impose upon myself a penance if I fall into it again. Bless, O my Jesus! all my efforts.”

COLLOQUY with our Lord, who Himself instituted the sacrament of Penance. Return Him thanks, ask His forgiveness for the faults and imperfections of your past confessions. Beg of Him to assist you to do better in future.

JESUS ARRIVES AT JERUSALEM

AFTER AN ABSENCE OF EIGHTEEN MONTHS

1st Prel. Behold Him preaching to an immense crowd in the temple.

2d Prel. Ask for grace to imitate His zeal and patience.

POINT I

DIVERSITY OF OPINIONS RESPECTING OUR LORD AT
JERUSALEM

CONSIDERATION.— Our Lord so arranged His journey that He arrived at Jerusalem, on the evening of the third day of the Feast of Tabernacles. He entered with His Apostles quietly and unobserved, and did not show Himself in the temple until the following day, which was the Sabbath. He thus frustrated the plot against His life. Nevertheless every one had been talking of Him, especially since He miraculously cured the ten lepers. “The Jews therefore sought Him on the festival-day, and said, Where is He? And there was much murmuring among the multitude concerning Him. For some said, He is a good man; and others said, No, but He seduceth the people.” (St. John 7: 11, 12.)

APPLICATION.— Be not surprised that people should think so very differently about our Lord. It always has been, and always will be, the case with public benefactors. Some praise their zeal; others, even well-meaning people, blame it, or attribute bad motives to it. Do not, then, think it strange if the same thing happens to you — if your superiors or your brethren form different estimates of your fitness for the office of preacher, catechist, professor, or director. If you are humble, you will wonder rather that any one should

have a good opinion of you; and so far from being offended or discouraged by criticisms passed upon yourself or your conduct, you will strive rather to profit by them. Have you done so?

AFFECTIONS.— Pray for grace to act on every occasion as becomes a humble disciple of Jesus.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will often reflect on these words of my Divine Master, "When you shall have done all these things that are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants." (St. Luke 17: 10.)

POINT II

ADMIRATION OF THE JEWS

CONSIDERATION.— The day after His arrival, the fourth day of the feast, "Jesus went up into the temple, and taught. And the Jews wondered, saying, How doth this man know letters, having never learned? Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me. He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory; but he that seeketh the glory of Him that sent him, he is true, and there is no injustice in him." (St. John 7: 14-16, 18.)

APPLICATION.— The doctrine which we preach in public or teach in private is not our own, but Christ's who sends us. We should, then, be most careful not to misrepresent it through inaccuracy, or want of preparation, or human respect. See if you have anything to reproach yourself with, either against *truth*, by falsifying, or against *justice*, by seeking your own glory.

AFFECTIONS.— Ask for the gift of speaking well, that you may convince others and touch their hearts.

RESOLUTIONS.— To manifest respect for the word of God, even in familiar instructions. To set aside all thought of yourself when explaining the doctrines of faith to others.

POINT III

THE CHIEF MEN AMONGST THE JEWS SHOW THEIR
HATRED OF JESUS

CONSIDERATION.— The doctors and princes of the nation, afraid of being thrown into the shade, had long tried to ruin Jesus in the popular estimation, and even to raise a tumult in which they might get Him killed without incurring the odium of murder. The people knew nothing of their intrigues, but Jesus did, and charged them with them openly, "Why seek you to kill Me?" But they pretended to be indignant, and answered, "*Dæmonium habes: quis te quærit interficere?*" "Thou hast a devil: who seeketh to kill Thee?" (St. John 7: 20.)

APPLICATION.— Alas! even in these days pride and wickedness conspire to excite the people by lies and calumnies against Christ, His Church, His Vicar, His priests — above all, against religious. Be not surprised or disturbed at this; follow your Divine Master, whose only answer to insult and calumny was a still more earnest endeavor to instruct and save the people. Have you done this?

COLLOQUY with the Blessed Virgin, who is specially invoked on this, the last day of the Octave celebrated in honor of her Nativity.

JESUS PREACHES AGAIN IN THE TEMPLE

Preludes as in the last Meditation.

POINT I

JESUS INVITES ALL THOSE WHO THIRST AFTER
RIGHTEOUSNESS

CONSIDERATION.— Jesus appeared a second time in the temple on the last and most solemn day of the feast; for then the Jews went to drink of the fountain of Siloe, and sprinkled the altar with its water to obtain a fruitful harvest. Our Lord took advantage of the concourse of people to give an instruction, which He began by an allusion to the ceremony of the day, "Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come to Me and drink," (St. John 7: 37;) that is to say, If anyone thirst for truth and holiness, which give supernatural life and vigor to the soul, let him come to Me; let him believe and hope in Me, the Source of life, and he shall be satisfied, the waters of life-giving grace shall spring and flow forth abundantly. "He that believeth in Me, as the Scripture saith, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." (St. John 7: 38.)

APPLICATION.— Ask most earnestly for this water of the supernatural life, these streams of sanctifying grace which fill us with the Spirit of God, and enable us to do an apostle's work; to spread around us the sweet odor of Jesus Christ, and a wealth of good works.

AFFECTIONS.— Beg of our Divine Lord that this ideal of the spiritual and apostolic man may be realized in us; ask the same grace for our brethren, particularly those employed on foreign missions.

RESOLUTIONS.—To endeavor to attain close and intimate union with Jesus Christ, the Model, the source, and the fullness of all perfection.

POINT II

JESUS DISARMS THE MESSENGERS SENT TO ARREST HIM

CONSIDERATION.—The chief priests and princes had stationed a band of men in the temple with orders to arrest our Lord and bring Him before them, if He attempted to preach again. But they were so softened and impressed by the Saviour's words, that "no man laid hands upon Him. The ministers therefore came to the chief priests and the Pharisees; and they said to them, Why have you not brought Him? The ministers answered, Never did man speak like this Man." (St. John 7: 44-46.)

APPLICATION.—Though our Lord knew perfectly well that men were waiting to seize Him and throw Him into prison, He obeyed the call of love and duty, and entered the temple. Let us imitate His courage and constancy. As religious, as apostles, let neither imprisonment nor death, much less regard for our health or fear of ridicule, turn us from the path of duty. Again, it is said that "no man laid hands upon Him, because His hour was not yet come." His hour—the day when He *wished* to be sacrificed by His enemies. We learn from this that evil will never prevail against us, except *at the time* and *in the way* that God permits. Still, we ought to be prudent, and make use of wise precautions; for Jesus went not up to Jerusalem until the third day of the feast, and did not show Himself publicly except in the temple.

AFFECTIONS.—Pray for lively faith in an ever-vigilant Providence; and the grace of conformity, on all occasions, with the Divine will.

RESOLUTIONS.—To rise superior to groundless fears.

POINT III

NICODEMUS IN THE COUNCIL TAKES THE PART OF JESUS

CONSIDERATION.—The chief priests and scribes, vexed at the failure of their plot, held a meeting in the evening to arrange some plan for securing the person of the Saviour. One, however, was found to take His part. This was Nicodemus, the same who came to Jesus by night. He said, "Doth our law judge any man, unless it first hear him, and know what he doth?" To this appeal to the first principles of justice, the answer was, "Art thou also a Galilean? Search the Scriptures, and see that out of Galilee a prophet riseth not: and every man returned to his own house." (St. John 7: 52, 53.)

APPLICATION.—We are indignant with these men thus blinded by their passions; but do we not follow their example when we suspect or condemn our brethren without knowing or inquiring into the motives of their conduct?

COLLOQUY with our Divine and Merciful Saviour.

THE WOMAN TAKEN IN ADULTERY

1st Prel. Picture to yourself our Lord, surrounded by the multitude in the temple, and saying to the adulteress, "Go, and now sin no more." (St. John 8: 11.)

2d Prel. Ask for grace to know the mind of Christ, and to be conformed to it.

POINT I

JESUS IS CHOSEN TO JUDGE THE CASE OF THE ADULTERESS

CONSIDERATION.—"And early in the morning He came again into the temple; and all the people came to Him, and, sitting down, He taught them. And the Scribes and Pharisees bring unto Him a woman taken in adultery, and they set her in the midst, and said to Him, Master, this woman was even now taken in adultery: Now Moses in the law commanded us to stone such a one. But what sayest Thou?" (St. John 8: 2-5.) They asked Him as if they intended to abide by His decision. By inviting Him to pass sentence upon the woman, these hypocrites appeared to pay Him great honor, but in reality they only wished to entangle Him, that they might have something whereof to accuse Him.

APPLICATION.—Consider this most difficult position in which our Lord was placed through the cunning of these wicked men. If He refused the office of judge, He would have seemed to deny His title as the one "Sent of God," as emphatically "the Master in Israel;" if He accepted it, He would either be denounced as a violator of the law, if He forgave her; or, if He condemned her, He would be taxed with cruelty and self-contradiction, because He had said He was come to save, not to destroy. See how Jesus foiled the cunning of His enemies, and even turned it

to their own confusion, and you will feel the truth of the words, "There is no wisdom, there is no prudence, there is no counsel against the Lord." You will admire, reverence, and love our Lord more than ever.

AFFECTIONS.— Adore and praise the infinite wisdom of God.

RESOLUTIONS.— To abandon yourself to the direction of God, whose goodness is equal to His wisdom.

POINT II

JESUS DISAPPOINTS HER ACCUSERS

CONSIDERATION.— Jesus, who knew the intense malice of those who asked Him to try the case of the adulteress, answered nothing, but "bowing Himself down, wrote with His finger on the ground. When, therefore, they continued asking Him, He lifted up Himself, and said to them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again stooping down, He wrote on the ground." Some think that He wrote the secret sins of the accusers. However that may be, "they went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, and Jesus alone remained, and the woman standing in the midst." (St. John 8: 6-9.)

APPLICATION.— Try to have constantly before your mind these words of our Lord, "He that is without sin," without defect, wrongheadedness, or singularity in his conduct—"let him first cast a stone" at his brethren. We shall then be more dissatisfied with ourselves than with others; we shall then be what humility and true charity require of us, "severe upon ourselves, indulgent to others."

AFFECTIONS.— Acts of contrition, repentance, supplication, and good-will.

RESOLUTIONS.— To impress on your memory the following words of the Apostle, and reflect on them

when occasion requires, "In quo judicas alterum, teipsum condemnas; eadem enim agis quæ judicas." "For wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself: for thou dost the same things which thou judgest." (Rom. 2: 1.)

POINT III

JESUS PARDONS THE ADULTERESS

CONSIDERATION.— When all her accusers were gone, and she was left alone with our Lord, He said to her, "Woman, where are they that accused thee — hath no man condemned thee? Who said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said, Neither will I condemn thee; go, and now sin no more." (St. John 8: 10, 11.) Doubly saved — body and soul together! What a blessed moment this must have been to her! What reverence, what gratitude, what love must her heart have felt for Jesus her Saviour!

APPLICATION.— Think of all this same God and Saviour has done for you. From how many dangers has He rescued you? how many sins has He forgiven you? You too will glow with love and gratitude. Close this Meditation with the outpouring of your heart, and let your actions through the day bear witness to it.

COLLOQUY with Jesus, our Merciful Saviour and Divine Model.

JESUS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

1st Prel. Picture to yourself Jesus saying, "I am the Light of the world." (St. John 8: 12.)

2d Prel. Ask for a great gift of divine light.

POINT I

JESUS IS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

CONSIDERATION.—"Ego sum lux mundi." "I am the Light of the world." (St. John 8: 12.) With these solemn words our Lord began His third sermon in the temple. To understand what the world owes to the Divine Light incarnate in the person of Jesus Christ, we must consider the state of society before the Incarnation. The most senseless idolatry was substituted for the worship of the only true God; divine honors were given to gods of wood and stone; human sacrifices were offered with the most dreadful cruelty; more than half the world were reduced to a state of slavery, and treated like brute beasts; children were abandoned; and the most shameful excesses, the worst vices, were raised to the rank of virtues.

APPLICATION.—To whom do we owe our deliverance from all the errors and abominations of paganism? To Jesus Christ, and to the light of the true faith which, by means of His Apostles, He spread throughout the world. It is to Him alone that we owe all the good, both natural and supernatural, that we enjoy; to Him who enlightens every man that does not willfully close his eyes; to Him who has taught us the nobleness of our origin, the grandeur of our destiny, the duties we owe to God, to our neighbors, and ourselves—duties which, faithfully fulfilled, would undoubtedly make the human race happy both in this world and the next. What gratitude, then, do

we not owe to our Lord? Have you thought enough of this? Do you try to make others feel it?

AFFECTIONS.—Enlighten, O Lord! those nations who yet sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.

RESOLUTIONS.—To pray frequently, and induce others to pray for the propagation of the faith.

POINT II

HE THAT FOLLOWS JESUS WALKETH NOT IN DARKNESS

CONSIDERATION.—"Qui sequitur me, non ambulat in tenebris." "He that followeth Me walketh not in darkness," (St. John 8: 12;) in the paths, that is, of vice and error—but in the daylight of truth and virtue. When pagan savages have been brought to Christ, and have learnt and followed the doctrines of His gospel, this of itself has been sufficient to transform them into models of virtue, of gentleness, of heroism. When, on the contrary, any abandon these doctrines, like the followers of Mohammed, they relapse into barbarism; when they alter it by heresy, they fall into a chaos of doubt and human opinions; when they are separated from it by schism, they become the sport of the secular power.

APPLICATION.—How sweet and consoling it is for us to meditate upon these great truths; for us whom the Lord "hath called out of darkness," in the persons of our ancestors, "into His marvelous light," (i. St. Peter 2: 9;) for us who, born of Catholic parents, have been taught from our childhood the knowledge and love of God! Let us take care to show ourselves worthy of this great favor.

AFFECTIONS.—Praise, gratitude, desire to excel in the knowledge and love of Jesus.

RESOLUTIONS.—To strive by every means in our

power to lead men to the knowledge and love of Christ.

POINT III

HE WHO FOLLOWS JESUS HAS THE LIGHT OF LIFE

CONSIDERATION.—“He that followeth Me walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life,” (St. John 8:12;) that is to say, the light of the spiritual life which leads to life eternal, to the beatific vision. He who lives habitually in a state of grace, exempt from mortal sin, is in the first grade of the spiritual life; he who lives exempt from deliberate venial sin, is in the second; he who, entirely detached from the world, aims habitually at the perfect imitation of Christ, is in the third.

APPLICATION.—You think highly of those who reach this third degree, because they have in this life great spiritual illumination, the source of sweetness unspeakable, and in the next a greater share in the joys of the beatific vision. Do not despair of attaining this. Jesus calls you to it; He gives you the means to reach it. Use them with humility, confidence, perseverance, and success will attend your efforts.

COLLOQUY with the most Blessed Virgin, through whom Jesus, our Light, our Life, and the Pledge of our eternal happiness, was given to the world.

THE SERMON CONTINUED:

CONTRADICTION AND VIOLENCE OF THE PHARISEES

1st Prel. Picture to yourself the Scribes and Pharisees watching Jesus preaching.

2d Prel. Ask for a great dread of the spirit of contradiction.

POINT I

THE SPIRIT OF CONTRADICTION SHOWN BY THE PHARISEES

CONSIDERATION.—“I am the Light of the world.” Our Lord had hardly uttered these solemn words, when the Pharisees interrupted Him, saying, “Thou givest testimony of Thyself; Thy testimony is not true. Jesus answered and said to them, Although I give testimony of Myself, My testimony is true, because I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent Me. And in your law it is written, that the testimony of two men is true. They said therefore to Him, Where is Thy Father? Jesus answered, If you did know Me, perhaps you would know My Father also.” Then turning to those who believed in Him, He said, “If you continue in My word, you shall be My disciples indeed; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” The Pharisees cried, “We are the seed of Abraham, and we have never been slaves to any man. How sayest Thou, You shall be free? Jesus answered them, Amen, amen, I say unto you, that whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.” (St. John 8: 13, 14, 16, 17, 19, 31-34.)

APPLICATION.—These frequent and impertinent interruptions prove that the Pharisees merely adopted this line of conduct because they felt that our Lord was infinitely their superior in knowledge, holiness, and authority. Their pride was hurt — thence came envy and the spirit of contradiction. Alas! does not this same spirit show itself somewhat in you? and against whom? Is it not against those who in many respects

are your superiors, and before whom you should be humble and silent?

AFFECTIONS.— Beg of God the grace to make a careful examination on this point, with regard to which we are so frequently blinded by pride.

RESOLUTIONS.— To fear and detest the spirit of contradiction.

POINT II

CALMNESS AND GENTLENESS OF JESUS

CONSIDERATION.—“ Jesus saith to them, If you be the children of Abraham, do the works of Abraham. But now you seek to kill Me, a man who have spoken the truth to you. You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you will do: he was a murderer from the beginning, and he stood not in the truth, because truth is not in him. But if I say the truth, you believe Me not. Which of you shall convince me of sin? He that is of God heareth the words of God. The Jews therefore answered and said to Him, Do not we say well that Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil? Jesus answered, I have not a devil, but I honor My Father. Amen, amen, I say unto you, If any man keep My word, he shall not see death forever. The Jews therefore said, Now we know that Thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and Thou sayest, If any man keep My word, he shall not taste death forever. Whom dost Thou make Thyself?” (St. John 8: 39, 40, 44-49, 51-53.)

APPLICATION.— Mark the imperturbable calmness and gentleness of our Divine Master, and try to imitate Him. If it is difficult to do so in many things, yet do not despair. With perseverance and prayer, all things are possible.

AFFECTIONS.— Pray that your heart may resemble those of St. Francis de Sales and St. Vincent de Paul, both of whom, by their invincible meekness and pa-

tience, succeeded in converting so many hardened sinners.

RESOLUTIONS.— To endeavor to observe the precept of the great Apostle, "Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil by good." (Romans 12:21.)

POINT III

DREADFUL CONSEQUENCES OF THE SPIRIT OF CONTRADICTION

CONSIDERATION.— To the question of the Pharisees, "Whom dost Thou make Thyself?" Jesus replied at once, by declaring that He was the Eternal Son of God. "If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing; it is My Father that glorifieth Me. Abraham your father rejoiced that he might see My day: he saw it, and was glad. The Jews therefore said to Him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast Thou seen Abraham? Jesus said to them, Amen, amen, I say to you, Before Abraham was made, I am." (St. John 8:54, 56-58.) In these short words the Jews understood our Lord to proclaim Himself to be, what in fact He was, the equal of God. They looked upon Him as a sacrilegious blasphemer, and "took up stones to cast at Him; but Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the Temple." (St. John 8:59.)

APPLICATION.— To understand this spirit of contradiction, which is the child of pride, and all the horror it deserves, see to what it led those even who were the depositaries of science and law in Israel, to what spiritual blindness and obstinacy; for they neither saw nor wished to see in Jesus the evident tokens that He was the Messiah; to what hardness of impiety, to what final impenitence. As our Lord said to them, "In peccato vestro moriemini." "You shall die in your sin." (St. John 8:21.)

COLLOQUY with the illustrious martyr, St. Januarius, whom God is pleased to glorify visibly even in our own time, and whose Feast is celebrated this day.

WONDERFUL CURE OF THE MAN BORN BLIND

1st Prel. Picture to yourself Jesus applying the clay moistened with spittle, to the eyes of the man born blind.

2d Prel. Ask for the blind man's faith and ready obedience.

POINT I

CAUSE OF THE BLINDNESS

CONSIDERATION.—Before leaving Jerusalem, our Lord wished to give His enemies, unworthy though they were, a still further proof of His Divinity—a proof striking, irresistible, of which every one should hear, and which should afterward be brought before the synagogue. St. John tells us, “Jesus, passing by, saw a man who was blind from his birth; and His disciples asked Him, Rabbi, who hath sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.” (St. John 9: 1–3.) Of course, our Lord in His answer, and the Apostles in their question, speak only with reference to the blindness. They had doubtless committed sin; “for there is no just man upon earth that doth good and sinneth not.” (Eccles. 7: 21.) But the blindness was not sent as a punishment for any sin.

APPLICATION.—We have here a plain proof that suffering in this world is not *always* the consequence of actual sin. Consequently, afflictions may not be sent as chastisements, but as trials, which God permits to fall upon the just, and even upon the greatest saints, for His own glory, and to increase their merits. So it was in the case of Job, of Tobias, of many other saints, both in the Old and New Testament; therefore, we

should never lose our confidence or get discouraged when the hand of God is upon us; we should rather rejoice, as St. James distinctly tells us. Again, in speaking of the misfortunes of the wicked, we should not always put them down as plain tokens of God's displeasure. Occasions may arise in which the same remark might be made of us. What has been your practice?

AFFECTIONS.— Let us pray for grace to bear courageously and with holy joy the crosses which God may be pleased to send us.

RESOLUTIONS.— To pray for this grace especially during those trials which are most painful to nature.

POINT II

MIRACULOUS CURE OF THE BLIND MAN

CONSIDERATION.—" When He had said these things, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and spread the clay upon his eyes, and said to him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloe, (which is interpreted Sent.) He went, therefore, and washed; and he came seeing." (St. John 9: 6, 7.)

APPLICATION.— One hardly knows which to admire most, the trial to which the blind man's faith and obedience was subjected, or the readiness with which he did what he was told, without making any objection, as he might naturally have done. Both are wonderful, and full of instruction for us. Let this story confirm our faith, let it teach us to leave ourselves entirely in the hands of God, and to render Him a *blind* obedience. We see here at once the merit and the recompense — what do we want more to encourage us?

AFFECTIONS.— Let us pray for more lively faith and more perfect obedience.

RESOLUTIONS.— To familiarize ourselves with this

pious aspiration: "Fac de me sicut vis, quia scio quod amator sis." "Do with me, Lord, that which Thou willest, because I know that Thou dost love me." (St. Aug.)

POINT III

SURPRISE AND DOUBT OF THE NEIGHBORS

CONSIDERATION.—The blind man, a beggar by profession, was known to every one. It was natural that his cure should make a great noise. "The neighbors, therefore, and they who had seen him before that he was a beggar, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? Some said, This is he. But others said, No; but he is like him. But he said, I am he. They said therefore to him, How were thine eyes opened? He answered, That man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed my eyes, and said to me, Go to the pool of Siloe, and wash. And I went, I washed, and I see." (St. John 9:8-11.)

APPLICATION.—We see in this candid avowal that the blind man attributed his cure directly to Jesus, because he owed it merely to the means our Saviour used. Following this example, let us believe, and openly profess our belief, that it is to God alone that we owe all corporal and spiritual good, as well as all the good we do. This is the way to secure ourselves from vain-glory, and to obtain fresh favors from God. Have we done so?

COLLOQUY with our Divine Saviour. Declare that we are unable to do good without the aid of His grace. Thank God for that in which He has assisted us. Pray for a docile heart, blindly submissive to the directions of superiors.

THE SAME CONTINUED *

1st Prel. Picture to yourself the blind man standing before the council.

2d Prel. Ask for his uprightness and generosity.

POINT I

THE BLIND MAN CONFOUNDS THE PHARISEES IN COUNCIL

CONSIDERATION.—The great miracle which our Lord wrought upon the blind man exasperated the Pharisees beyond measure. They determined to damage His reputation, either by questioning the truth of the miracle, or by charging Him with breaking the law by doing it on the sabbath. They had the blind man and his parents brought before the council. The latter declared that he was their son, and that he was born blind. The man on his part declared again that it was Jesus who had spread the clay upon his eyes, and told him to wash, which he did, and was cured. Not being able to deny the fact, they tried to rob Him of the seal of His Divinity. "This man is not of God," they said, "who keepeth not the sabbath." He must, then, be an agent of the devil; and they tried in every way to make the man think so, but to no purpose. "From the beginning of the world," he said, "it hath not been heard that any man hath opened the eyes of one born blind: unless this Man were of God, He could not do anything." Ashamed and angry at seeing themselves thus refuted by an ignorant beggar, and having no better arguments at hand, "They answered and said to him, Thou wast wholly born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out." (St. John 9: 16, 32-34.)

* For the Meditation on the Apostle St. Matthew, whose Feast occurs this day, see Vol. I., page 540.

APPLICATION.— It is for our instruction and consolation that the Holy Spirit caused these details to be given. Let us profit by them. Henceforward let us understand better and hate more the base passion of envy. Of what good is it? What did it do for the Pharisees except to cover them with shame and brand them with dishonor? On the other hand, if you are the object of it, fear not; as long as you have truth and virtue on your side, it will do you more good than harm. So it was, that everything which our Lord's enemies did against Him through envy ended by adding a proof of the truth of this great miracle, and consequently of His Divinity. "*Diligentibus Deum omnia co-operantur in bonum.*" "To them that love God, all things work together unto good." (Rom. 8: 28.) What can be more consoling?

AFFECTIONS.— Pray for an upright heart, and intense horror of the vice of envy, as well as of the disguises under which this passion conceals itself.

RESOLUTIONS.— To encourage and extol virtue, wheresoever it may be found, or by whomsoever it is practiced.

POINT II

THE BLIND MAN ACKNOWLEDGES AND ADORES HIS DIVINE BENEFACTOR

CONSIDERATION.— The uprightness and generosity of the man in glorifying Jesus before the council were magnificently rewarded. "Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and when He had found him, He said to him Dost thou believe in the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him? And Jesus said to him, Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with Thee. And he said, I believe, Lord; and falling down, he adored

Him." (St. John 9: 35-38.) Thus was sight given to his soul as well as to his body. Tradition tells us that he attached himself to our Lord's person; that he was one of the seventy-two disciples; that afterward he was the companion in exile of Lazarus; that he was miraculously landed with him on the coast of Gaul, there labored as an apostle with great success, and died a most holy death at Aix in Provence.

APPLICATION.— Thank our Lord with all your heart for having opened your eyes, and revealed Himself to you in a special way; for having made you understand His counsels; for having drawn you to them by the grace of predilection. Ask that you may increase in the knowledge of His Divine perfections; that you may love Him more, and try to show your love by making others know and love Him as much as you can.

COLLOQUY with our loving Saviour.

MISSION OF THE SEVENTY-TWO DISCIPLES

1st Prel. Picture to yourself Jesus giving them their instructions.

2d Prel. Ask for the docility and zeal which they showed.

POINT I

APPOINTMENT AND MISSION OF THE SEVENTY-TWO

CONSIDERATION.—Jesus, after warning His disciples against the wiles of the Pharisees, left Jerusalem toward the end of the month. He wished to visit and preach in the other towns and villages of Judea. A great work, and but little time to do it in; for the end was approaching — but six months distant. The better to accomplish His purpose, and at the same time to train evangelists who could work at a distance, He “appointed also other seventy-two; and He sent them two and two before His face into every city and place whither He Himself was to come.” (St. Luke 10: 1.)

APPLICATION.—You envy the lot of these favored disciples. What happiness, you say, to be the chosen of Christ; to be trained in His school, and upon His model, for one or perhaps for two years, then to have been called and sent upon this mission so full of honor and of merit; to prepare His way before Him, and to win for Him the hearts of men! Doubtless this is a lot worth envying; but has it not fallen upon you also? Have you not enjoyed, are you not still enjoying, as religious, elect followers of Christ, the very same advantages? Your life is devoted to works of charity and zeal; is not this identical with the aim of the seventy-two?

AFFECTION.—Joy, congratulation, thanksgiving.

Desire to prove yourself worthy of your vocation.

RESOLUTIONS.—To hold in esteem, and observe as directed, the rule of companionship, which all founders of religious orders, in imitation of our Lord, consider one of the most essential points of discipline.

POINT II

THE INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN TO THE SEVENTY-TWO

CONSIDERATION.—Our Lord gave these new missionaries nearly the same instructions as He had given to the Apostles when He sent them a few months before to preach in Galilee: "Behold, I send you as lambs among wolves: carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes, and salute no man by the way. Into whatsoever house you enter, first say, Peace be to this house! . . . And into what city soever you enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you. . . . But if they receive you not, going forth into the streets thereof, say, Even the very dust of your city that cleaveth to us we wipe off against you. . . . I say to you, it shall be more tolerable at that day for Sodom than for that city. Yet know this, that the kingdom of God is at hand," (St. Luke 10: 3-5, 8, 10-12,) for those who will repent.

APPLICATION.—Let these divine lessons, these rules of conduct, sink deeply into your heart, and, should occasion arise, follow them closely. They may be summed up in these few words: gentleness, disinterestedness, constancy, conciliation, simplicity, recollectedness—all these joined to evangelical firmness, but tempered by mercy, tenderness, and calls to repentance. Examine yourself under these heads.

AFFECTIONS.—Pray for grace to discern clearly what is requisite to render your works of charity and

zeal more pleasing to God and more serviceable to your neighbors.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will strive to perform all works of charity and zeal solely for God and for the good of souls.

POINT III

WOES PRONOUNCED AGAINST THE CITIES WHICH REJECTED THE WORD OF GOD

CONSIDERATION.— This third Point brings before us something sad, something fearful. The woes which our Lord pronounced against the hardened cities: "Wo to thee, Corozain! Wo to thee, Bethsaida! For if in Tyre and Sidon had been wrought the mighty works that have been wrought in you, they would have done penance long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you; and thou, Capharnaum, which art exalted unto heaven, thou shalt be thrust down to hell." (St. Luke 10: 13-15.)

APPLICATION.— These woes should inspire us with a wholesome fear. We have been not less favored with the gifts of grace than the inhabitants of Capharnaum. Have we corresponded to them as we should?

COLLOQUY with the illustrious martyr, St. Maurice, and his numerous and heroic companions in suffering, whose Feast we celebrate this day.

THE RETURN AND JOY

OF THE SEVENTY-TWO DISCIPLES

1st Prel. Picture to yourself our Lord surrounded by the joyful disciples.

2d Prel. Ask for that joy which our Lord would acknowledge.

POINT I

JESUS MODERATES THE JOY OF THE DISCIPLES

CONSIDERATION.—The mission of the seventy-two had been a great success, because they had faithfully observed our Lord's directions. Obedience gave them the victory over men and devils, as it is written, "Vir obediens loquetur victorias." "An obedient man shall speak of victory," (Prov. 21: 28.) "And the seventy-two returned with joy, saying, Lord, the devils also are subject to us in Thy name." This was a legitimate joy; yet we gather from our Lord's reply that it was not altogether free from a vain complacency. He said, "I saw Satan like lightning falling from heaven." (St. Luke 10: 18.) As much as to say, Take care, beware of vainglory; it leads to pride, and pride can make you fall, as it made Lucifer and his angels fall from heaven.

APPLICATION.—Learn from this two things: 1st. To follow the rule of obedience; this will insure us success in all we do. 2d. To be on our guard against the insidious attacks, the subtle approach, of vainglory, which follows so naturally in the train of success, and which can rob us of all our merit.

AFFECTIONS.—Pray for a salutary dread of vainglory, and for the spirit of discernment, in order that you may shun its illusions.

RESOLUTIONS.—To oppose to all temptations of pride an act of humility, saying, My God, have mercy on me. I have not yet attained contempt and forgetfulness of self. By this means you will turn the temptation to your advantage.

POINT II

JESUS CORRECTS THE JOY OF HIS DISCIPLES

CONSIDERATION.—The joy of the disciples arose from the success they had obtained. Our Lord wished to show them that this motive was not a sound one, inasmuch as success does not depend upon ourselves, does not justify us, and will not always give us a claim to recompense. He pointed out to them, and through them to us, a more substantial motive: "Rejoice not in this, that spirits are subject unto you; but rejoice in this, that your names are written in heaven," (St. Luke 10: 20;) or, as He says elsewhere, "in the Book of Life."

APPLICATION.—We may wish for success in our good works, we should even try to obtain it; we may also rejoice if we succeed, and be sorry if we fail; but, through it all, our intention must be pure—we must have a single eye to God's glory and our neighbor's good. How comes it that too often failure troubles and disheartens us? Clearly because we think more of our own glory than we do of God. We know that God does not require us to succeed in everything; and if the failure is not the fruit of our own negligence, it will not lessen the reward of our labor. Is it not a spirit of self-seeking which makes us so eager to undertake things which will do us credit, so unwilling to engage in those which can not bring us into notice? Lift yourself above all this wretched self-love. Raise your thoughts to heaven. Let your happiness and joy con-

sist in pleasing God, in having your name written on the Heart of Jesus, in the Book of Life.

AFFECTIONS.—Let us pray that these may be our thoughts and sentiments.

RESOLUTIONS.—To spare no pains to attain this end, while leaving our success to God.

POINT III

JESUS SHARES HIS DISCIPLE'S JOY

CONSIDERATION.—Our Lord tenderly loved His disciples. He sympathized with them, and rejoiced with them the more, for He knew that the cause of their joy was the gifts bestowed on them by His Heavenly Father. “He rejoiced in the Holy Ghost, and said, I confess to Thee, O Father! Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones. Yea, Father, for so it hath seemed good in Thy sight.” (St. Luke 10: 21.)

APPLICATION.—When your brother succeeds, rejoice with him. If he surpasses you in ability or in virtue, let no secret jealousy enter your heart, but rather give thanks to God for having enriched him with such gifts. You have a share in them, for we are all members of the same mystical body. Is this the way in which you have regarded the distribution of God's gifts?

COLLOQUY with St. Linus, martyr, the immediate successor of St. Peter, whose Feast is celebrated this day.

THE CHARITY AND LOVING CALLS OF JESUS

1st Prel. Listen to Jesus saying, "Come to Me; . . . take up My yoke upon you, and learn of Me." (St. Matt. 11:28, 29.)
2d Prel. Ask for grace to correspond faithfully to His loving calls.

POINT I

JESUS INVITES US TO COME TO HIM

CONSIDERATION.— Though our Lord devoted Himself especially to His chosen disciples, yet He did not neglect the people. His compassionate love extended to every child of the house of Israel. Later on, it extended to the whole world, through the ministry of His apostles and disciples. It was to imbue them with this spirit of compassionate universal love that in their presence He uttered those touching words, "Come to Me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you." (St. Matt. 11:28.) He excepts no one, but prefers those whom the world despises — the poor, the ignorant, the unfortunate.

APPLICATION.— Here is your pattern. Under obedience you instruct, you nurse, you console the young, the ignorant, the sick, the poor, the imbecile. Attach yourself by preference to the most destitute, the most suffering, the most repulsive. This preference will increase your resemblance to your Divine Master. Never allow yourself to be disgusted or disheartened. Jesus, who acts in and for you, is all-powerful. He will sustain you by His grace. He will bring you through all your difficulties, all the trials which your nature shrinks from. "Deo autem gratias, qui semper triumphat nos in Christo Jesus." "Now thanks be to God, who always maketh us to triumph in Christ Jesus." (II. Cor. 2:14.)

AFFECTIONS.— Pray for the spirit of boundless and compassionate charity.

RESOLUTIONS.— To have recourse to Jesus with unhesitating confidence, as well in our own trials and sufferings as in those of our neighbor.

POINT II

JESUS INVITES US TO TAKE UP HIS YOKE, WHICH IS SWEET AND LIGHT

CONSIDERATION.— Jesus, after inviting all those who seek relief from the sufferings inseparable from our human nature, makes a touching appeal to those who, deceived by the fair promises of the devil, have submitted to his yoke, but find that they have but added remorse to their former pains. “Take up My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; because I am meek, and humble of heart, and you shall find rest to your souls. For My yoke is sweet, and My burden light.” (St. Matt. 11 : 29, 30.)

APPLICATION.— We are of the small number who have accepted our Lord’s invitation most unreservedly, by leaving all to submit to His law, and to follow His counsels. But, alas! there may have been years of service to the world, of slavery to our passions, before we turned to Him. Yet if it is so, we can better appreciate the difference between the yoke of the devil and that of Christ, we can better understand the solid happiness of our present state, we will give ourselves to it with greater fervor. The longer our experience is of the truth of these words, “My yoke is sweet,” the greater will be our fervor. “You shall find rest to your soul;” an interior rest which the world does not know, and which it can not give — a rest accompanied often by those spiritual joys which are a foretaste of the bliss of heaven.

AFFECTIONS.— Let us return thanks to God for the grace of our vocation, and ask pardon for the faults of which we have been guilty.

RESOLUTIONS.— To serve God generously for His own sake rather than for the sake of His consolations.

POINT III

JESUS INVITES US TO PRACTICE HUMILITY

CONSIDERATION.—“ Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart, and you shall find rest to your souls.” It is clear from these words that in order to taste this delicious peace which our Lord promises to those who serve Him faithfully, we must not only be fervent, but also gentle and humble, patiently bearing all injuries, and rendering good for evil.

APPLICATION.— The way to get and to keep these good dispositions, which are so contrary to our natural inclinations, is to have always before us our Lord's example and His glorious promises. This will make everything easy and delightful to us.

COLLOQUY with the most Blessed Virgin, through whom we may have access to Jesus, and obtain His mercy. She is invoked this day by the universal Church, in the Office and Mass, under the title of *Our Lady of Mercy*.

JESUS SILENCES A SCRIBE WHO IS IN BAD FAITH

1st Prel. Picture to yourself the scribe standing before Jesus, and a crowd round them.

2d Prel. Ask for grace to love God and your neighbors with an upright and generous heart.

POINT I

WHAT MUST WE DO TO BE SAVED?

CONSIDERATION.—Jesus having entered one sabbath-day into the synagogue to teach as He was wont to do, “a certain lawyer stood up, tempting Him, and saying, Master, what must I do to possess eternal life?” (St. Luke 10:25.) He did not put this question seriously, he only hoped to get some answer from our Lord which might afterward be turned against Him. Our Lord would therefore have been perfectly justified in treating him with silent contempt; yet, for the sake of those who stood round, He deigned to reply.

APPLICATION.—If you happen to meet with unprincipled persons who ask questions in a captious spirit, or pretend to have doubts about the faith, do not enter into any discussion with them, as if you believed in their sincerity, (for they would only laugh at you,) unless the honor of our religion required it, or you saw that it would give you an opportunity of explaining things to others who were present. But, in this case, do nothing rashly. Our Lord did not say to all indiscriminately, “I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to resist and gainsay.” (St. Luke 21:15.) If you are not a priest, or theologian, well acquainted with the subject, avoid controversy. It may do great harm

to religion, as well as to those who hear you, and impiety will triumph.

AFFECTIONS.— Beg of Jesus the grace to combine, according to His precept, the wisdom of the serpent with the simplicity of the dove.

RESOLUTIONS.— To watch diligently over your words and actions.

POINT II

HOW WE SHOULD LOVE GOD

CONSIDERATION.— Our Lord, wishing to show the lawyer that it was not for the sake of instruction that he asked the question, replied, "What is written in the law? How readest thou? He answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself. And He said to him, Thou hast answered right; this do, and thou shalt live." (St. Luke 10: 26–28.)

APPLICATION.— Give your whole mind to study the practical meaning of each of the terms in this great commandment, so that you may keep it more perfectly.

"With thy whole heart." This is to love nothing so much as God, nothing except in and for God, to be habitually disposed to do anything or suffer anything to please God, to desire only what leads to God, to hate all that turns us from Him.

"With thy whole soul." This is to be ready to give your life for God, to lose everything rather than lose the grace of God, to banish from your mind every thought which could displease God, or hinder an intimate union with Him.

"With all thy strength." This is to spare neither pain nor trouble to advance the glory of God; it is to consecrate to Him our time, our talents, our body, our health, our repose, and every energy of our soul.

"With all thy mind." This is to be ever striving to come to a better knowledge of the infinite perfections and the will of God, and only to engage in secular studies so far as they make us more fit to work for God. Judge from this how much you love God.

AFFECTIONS.—Acts of faith in these truths — repentance and love, with humble prayer.

RESOLUTIONS.—Frequently to beg of God that He may teach us to love Him, as He desires to be loved.

POINT III

HOW WE SHOULD LOVE OUR NEIGHBOR

CONSIDERATION.—The lawyer, mortified by the exposure of his insincerity, wished to set himself right with the others around him; he therefore asked another question, "And who is my neighbor?" (St. Luke 10: 29.) But our Lord, answering him by the parable of the Good Samaritan, laid bare all the pride, malice, and selfishness which lurked in his heart, and in those of his colleagues, nominally doctors, but really corruptors of the law.

APPLICATION.—By trying to justify ourselves like this proud lawyer, we make our position worse both before God and before men.

COLLOQUY with our Divine Saviour.

PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN:

ITS LITERAL MEANING

1st Prel. Picture to yourself a man robbed and wounded, succored by a charitable stranger.

2d Prel. Ask for a compassionate and generous charity.

POINT I

SELFISHNESS OF THE PRIESTS AND DOCTORS OF THE SYNAGOGUE

CONSIDERATION.—Our Lord's object in the parable (or, as some Fathers say, the history) of the Good Samaritan was publicly to stigmatize the selfish teaching of the doctors of the synagogue, who only recognized as their neighbors those of their own nation who were just, a title which they arrogated to themselves. To the question, "And who is my neighbor?" our Lord replied, "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, who also stripped him, and having wounded him, went away, leaving him half-dead; and it chanced that a certain priest went down the same way, and seeing him, passed by; in like manner also a Levite, when he was near the place, and saw him, passed by." (St. Luke 10:30-32.)

APPLICATION.—We have here a picture drawn by our Lord Himself of the want of charity amongst the priests and Levites. How consoling it is to turn from this to the boundless charity of our priests, whether secular or religious! There is no disease, either of soul or body, which they do not seek out and strive to cure. They have filled the world with institutions for the relief of misery in every form: for the child still in its cradle, for the forsaken, the aged,

the blind, the deaf and dumb, the insane, the sick of all ages and all ranks, the plague-stricken, the incurable. And everywhere the laity nobly second their efforts; even women, not content with giving their money, give themselves, and seek in far-distant lands for suffering to alleviate, for souls to win. O Jesus! it is to You, to Your divine teaching, to Your example, that we owe these wonderful effects of charity, which, until Your coming, the world had never seen!

AFFECTIONS.—Offer your tribute of admiration, praise, and thanksgiving to Jesus.

RESOLUTIONS.—To watch over ourselves, that the habit of witnessing misery and suffering may not lessen our charity and sensibility.

POINT II

THE GENEROUS CHARITY OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN

CONSIDERATION.—With the miserable selfishness of the priest and Levite, our Lord contrasts the noble generosity of a Samaritan, whom the Jews would not condescend to recognize as a neighbor. “But a certain Samaritan, being on his journey, came near him, and seeing him, was moved with compassion. And going up to him, bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine; and setting him upon his own beast, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And the next day he took out two pence, and gave to the host, and said, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou shalt spend over and above, I, at my return, will repay thee.” (St. Luke 10: 33–35.)

APPLICATION.—Our Lord evidently wished us to understand by this — 1st. That we should look upon all, without exception, as our neighbors, even though they may be of a different nation or religion, as were the Jews and Samaritans. 2d. That the only charity

which is worth having, is that which shows itself by its deeds. 3d. That the simple, when their hearts are right, understand their duty better than learned men, who are proud: it is a Samaritan who sets an example to a Jew, a layman to a priest. Take care not to be surpassed in generosity by pious laymen.

AFFECTIONS.—Form in your heart the desire of becoming one day a martyr of charity. Offer this desire to God with all your heart.

RESOLUTIONS.—To manifest charity in a special manner toward those with whom we feel the least sympathy.

POINT III

HUMILIATING CONFESSION OF THE LAWYER

CONSIDERATION.—After our Lord had spoken this parable, He asked the lawyer, “Which of these three, in thy opinion, was neighbor to him that fell among the robbers? But he said, He that showed mercy to him.” Thus it was that our Lord, for the second time, condemned him out of his own mouth, and having left him without excuse, He bid him, “Go, and do thou in like manner.” (St. Luke 10: 36, 37.)

APPLICATION.—“Fac similiter.” “Do thou in like manner.” In these last words our Lord tells us that our charity, like that of the Samaritan, should be active and generous, that we should exercise it at the expense of our personal comfort, of our tastes, our health, even of our life, if the salvation of our neighbor requires it. How far does your charity go?

COLLOQUY with the Blessed Virgin, Queen of martyrs in the cause of charity.

SPIRITUAL INTERPRETATION

OF THE PARABLE

Preludes as in the former Meditation.

POINT I

THE TRAVELER ROBBED AND WOUNDED A TYPE OF
THE SINNER

CONSIDERATION.—The mystical meaning which many Fathers attach to this parable, and which our Lord may have had in view, is not hard to discover. It is the whole race of man, fallen and bruised by the sin of Adam, raised up again, and finally cured by the Word made flesh, the Redeemer of the world. In a more restricted sense, it is the sinner and his Saviour. Consider, first, how all that happened to the unfortunate traveler who fell among the thieves has its counterpart in the soul which falls through mortal sin into the devil's power. It is robbed of all—of its innocence, its bridal robe, of sanctifying grace, of its supernatural beauty which made it like the angels, of its rights of divine adoption, of all its merits. It is covered besides with hideous wounds which sin has made in it; in short, having only faith without charity, it is half dead.

APPLICATION.—Wretched I should rightly call myself, if in my life I have committed but one mortal sin; wretched, when I think of the state to which I brought myself, and in which I lived for weeks and months; doubly wretched, in that I blinded myself to my misery, and even delighted in it. Where should I be now, if death had surprised me then? But how came this misfortune upon me? Because I *went down from*

Jerusalem to Jericho; that is to say, because in thought and in affection I went far away from God, from heaven, from my last end, to seek earthly goods and worldly pleasures. Alas! religious though I am, I can still wander away. How I should tremble, then, for my perseverance, tremble lest I should fall, as other religious have done, into the snares which the devil sets for them.

AFFECTIONS.— Pray for the fear of God, and the grace to distrust yourself.

RESOLUTIONS.— To dread and shun dissipation and self-indulgence; for the dissipated mind loses sight of God, while the habit of gratifying the senses tends to the growth of earthly passions, and leads imperceptibly to every species of disorder.

POINT II

THE GOOD SAMARITAN A TYPE OF CHRIST

CONSIDERATION.— In the good Samaritan behold the figure of Jesus, our Divine Saviour. The resemblance is too strong to be mistaken. The Jew left half dead was, in the eyes of the Samaritan, a stranger, a natural enemy, and moreover, a wretch reduced to a horrible and loathsome condition. Yet, the moment he saw him, he was touched with compassion, dismounts, and succors him. We also, by sin, have become strangers, enemies, loathsome in the eyes of the Son of God. Yet, at the sight of our misery, He is touched with compassion, comes down from heaven, becomes our neighbor through the Incarnation, rescues us. Now, think of all that the good Samaritan did to console and cure the traveler, and you will see a faint image of what Christ has done for you. He poured over the wounds of your soul the wine of compunction, and the oil of sanctifying grace, and He has

closed them with the balm of His precious blood. Then He laid you, not upon a beast of burden, but upon His own shoulders like the Good Shepherd, and carried you, a religious, not into an inn, but to a house of His own, charged another with your welfare, Himself directed that all your wants, both bodily and spiritual, should be supplied until He should return to bring you into the palace of His glory.

APPLICATION.—If you could not help feeling love and admiration for the good Samaritan in the parable, how much more should you feel for the True Samaritan, who every day has shown Himself so good, so generous toward you! But how can you show your love and gratitude? By fervor in serving Him, by obedience to your superiors, who represent Him, by eagerness to assist the poor, the sick, the wretched, in whom He lives, suffers, hungers, as He said Himself, “I was hungry, and you gave Me to eat; sick, and you visited Me. As long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me.” (St. Matt. 25: 35, 36, 40.) In this way show your gratitude.

COLLOQUY with the great brother physicians and martyrs, Cosmas and Damian, whose Feast is observed this day.

MOTIVES AND CONDITIONS OF BROTHERLY LOVE

1st Prel. Picture to yourself St. Peter saying, "Before all things, have a constant mutual charity among yourselves." (1. St. Peter 4:8.)

2d Prel. Ask for a great desire to excel in brotherly love.

POINT I

THE PRECEPT OF CHRIST THE FIRST MOTIVE OF CHARITY

CONSIDERATION.—Our Meditation on the good Samaritan reminds us of the great duty of brotherly love, in which the charm of a religious life should consist. What motives are set before us for cultivating this virtue? 1st. Our Lord makes it His great commandment. "A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another, as I have loved you." (St. John 13:34.) 2d. He wishes charity to be the distinctive mark of His true disciples. "By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love one for another." (St. John 13:35.) 3d. Having all left our earthly fathers, and having now but one common Father who is in heaven, we are brothers indeed, seated at the same table, walking the same road by the observance of the same rule. 4th. In consequence of our frequent communions, the same blood flows through our veins — the blood of Christ.

APPLICATION.—If you consider attentively these motives, your love for charity will increase. So, too, will your desire faithfully to observe the conditions under which alone it can exist in community life, and to understand the secret of mutual support, which requires two things. 1st. That you should not only bear patiently with the faults of *all* your brothers, but even excuse them, and shut your eyes to them. 2d. That

you should readily forgive and forget injuries done to you, attributing them to thoughtlessness rather than making a personal matter of them; that no one should ever hear you say, "I keep out of the way of such a brother, or else I should lose my temper — I can't get on with him;" or, "I try to be on good terms with all; but if one offends me, I take care to let him know it, for his own sake." This is not mutual support; this is not the language of charity, but of the world.

AFFECTIONS.—Humble yourself before God, finding that you are yet so deficient in charity.

RESOLUTIONS.—Frequently to make a particular examination with regard to interior and exterior faults against fraternal charity.

POINT II

OUR LORD'S EXAMPLE THE SECOND MOTIVE

CONSIDERATION.—The whole life of Jesus was one act of love. Far from being a burden to any one, He passed His life in doing good to all, without complaining of the ingratitude He received in return. He took upon himself all our sorrows to console them, all our sins to expiate them. After a life of sacrifice, He died the martyr of love, finding excuses even for His executioners: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." (St. Luke 23: 34.)

APPLICATION.—Let us be ready, as our Saviour was, to sacrifice our comfort, and, if need be, our health, or even our life, for our brothers. Let us at least be faithful to what, in the second place, the law of mutual support requires — to watch ourselves, to abstain from everything which could hurt or vex another, to become all things to all men. You know that such and such things give offense — alter them. Your jokes are not always taken in good part — leave off

making them. On certain days, bodily suffering makes you cross — set an especial watch over yourself, then, lest others get the benefit of it. How have you observed these necessary rules? In what have you failed most?

AFFECTIONS.— Pray for grace to observe more perfectly all that is required of you by the precept of charity and the rule of mutual assistance.

RESOLUTIONS.— To become all to all for the good of all, after the example of the Apostle, “*Omnibus omnia factus sum, ut omnes facerem salvos.*” “I became all things to all men, that I might save all.” (1. Cor. 9: 22.)

POINT III

OUR LORD'S THREATS AND PROMISES THE THIRD MOTIVE

CONSIDERATION.— It appears from our Lord's words that the sentence which He will pronounce at the last day will depend mainly upon our charity. “Come, ye blessed of My Father; . . . I was hungry, and you gave Me to eat.” And on His left hand, “Depart from Me, you cursed; . . . I was hungry, and you gave Me not to eat.” (St. Matt. 25: 34, 35, 41, 42.)

APPLICATION.— How immensely it is for our interest (to put it on the lowest grounds) to excel in charity, and to fight strenuously against our self-love, which is the chief cause of our want of love.

COLLOQUY with our Lord, Sovereign of the martyrs of charity.

BROTHERLY LOVE AND ITS QUALITIES

1st Prel. Listen to our Lord saying, "Love one another, as I have loved you." (St. John 15: 12.)
2d Prel. Beg for the spirit of holy charity.

POINT I

OUR CHARITY SHOULD BE SUPERNATURAL AND
UNIVERSAL

CONSIDERATION.— Our Lord wishes us to love one another *as* He has loved us. "*Ut diligatis invicem sicut dilexi vos.*" He has loved us with a love supernatural, universal, active, compassionate, generous, and heroic. Such should be the character of our love. Above all, it should be supernatural, based upon faith, which enables us to discern and love in our brother a living image of God, a member of the mystical body of Christ—yes, even Christ Himself, who says that He looks upon that as done to Himself which we do to another. If our charity is supernatural, it will be also universal; for *all* our brothers are children of God, and brothers of Christ.

APPLICATION.— Do not fall into the mistake of so many Christians, who flatter themselves that they have charity when they have but the shadow of it. Such people are cold and indifferent, except to those whose position or influence makes them desirable acquaintances, or to whom they may have taken a fancy. In this there is not even a shadow of real charity—nothing but selfishness. Beware of such a delusion, and strive to make more progress in true charity, in that which is supernatural, which will make you embrace in Christ all your brother. equally; unless, in-

deed, it leads you rather to prefer those whom you naturally dislike.

AFFECTIONS.—An ardent desire to realize in yourself the ideal of perfect charity.

RESOLUTIONS.—In the exercise of charity to guard specially against the delusions of self-love and the snares of sense.

POINT II

CHARITY IS ACTIVE AND COMPASSIONATE

CONSIDERATION.—The charity of Christ was not a mere sentiment, it showed itself in action. His public life, which we have nearly finished, was an unbroken series of acts of charity, of a charity engaging and tender.

APPLICATION.—Is your charity like this? Is it active? Does it make you anxious to help and comfort your brothers in every possible way? Is it attentive to the needs, the sufferings of your brothers; or is it rendered grudgingly, at the instance of humble petitions? When you see a brother in difficulty from overwork or fatigue, are you content with merely expressing your regret; or if sent to help him, do you go with a bad grace? Ah! if you had a more lively faith, you would have a more perfect charity—you would anticipate your brother's wants, remembering that it is to your Lord you do it in the person of your brother.

AFFECTIONS.—Pray for lively faith, and active and ready charity.

RESOLUTIONS.—To ask pardon of those whom you may have even involuntarily offended or grieved, and endeavor by increased kindness toward them, to atone for your fault.

POINT III

IT MUST BE GENEROUS AND HEROIC

CONSIDERATION.—The love which Jesus bore us regarded not only our bodily needs, but still more the wants of the soul; in all its manifestations it was self-sacrificing, it was heroic. “*Majorem hac dilectionem nemo habet, ut animam suam ponat quis pro amicis suis.*” “Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” (St. John 15:13.)

APPLICATION.—Here is the pattern and the measure for your charity. It must be generous, ready (when called upon) to make heroic sacrifices for the temporal and, above all, for the spiritual good of your brothers. In the mean time, we should at least support, encourage, and, by our good example, edify them. We should frequently commend them to God, and pray that the community may increase in numbers and in fervor. Have you thus understood and practiced charity?

COLLOQUY with the Archangel Michael, the special defender of the Church and the faithful. His Feast is this day solemnized throughout the world.

JESUS IN THE HOUSE OF MARTHA AND MARY

1st Prel. Picture to yourself St. Mary Magdalene in contemplation at the feet of Jesus.

2d Prel. Ask for grace to unite contemplation with activity.

POINT I

JESUS VISITS MARTHA AND MARY

CONSIDERATION.—Now that He had left Capharnaum, our Lord had no settled home, so He generally relied for food and lodging on the hospitality of others. So, as St. Luke tells us, “It came to pass as they went that He entered into a certain town; and a certain woman named Martha received Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who, sitting also at the Lord’s feet, heard His word. But Martha was busy about much serving.” (St. Luke 10: 38–40.)

APPLICATION.—While we consider these two sisters, so widely differing in character, and yet so closely united to each other, let us think if it is not possible and even necessary to unite the *active* with the *contemplative* life — a blessed union, and one most fruitful in merits! In what does it consist? Is it *merely* to add to our works of charity the office said in choir? If this were all, the union would be neither difficult nor rare — almost every religious would accomplish it. No, it is something more than this — it consists in being *habitually* united to God by intention and affection in all exterior work, even amid the distraction and bustle of the world.

AFFECTIONS.—Let us pray that the Holy Spirit may Himself instruct us in the practice of this most excellent union.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will endeavor to accustom myself

to the use of some certain ejaculatory prayer, which may tend to keep me constantly united with God.

POINT II

MARTHA COMPLAINS OF MARY: JESUS REPLIES

CONSIDERATION.— While the evening meal was being prepared, Mary sat at our Lord's feet in sweet repose, feeding her soul with the Divine Word. Martha, on the contrary, was engrossed in household matters. "Martha satagebat circa frequens ministerium." Seeing that her sister had no intention of helping her, she thought she might fairly complain: "Lord, hast Thou no care that my sister hath left me alone to serve? Speak to her, therefore, that she help me. And the Lord answering said to her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful, and art troubled about many things. But one thing is necessary. Mary hath chosen the best part, which shall not be taken away from her." (St. Luke 10: 40-42.)

APPLICATION.— Let us dwell a little on these words, every one of which is full of meaning. 1st. "Thou art careful, and art troubled about many things." How many religious, in other respects fervent and zealous, merit this reproach, because they allow themselves to be engrossed in matters foreign to their office, or do their duty in an excitable, self-seeking spirit, impatient of failure! Might our Lord's words be applied to you? Examine yourself and see. 2d. "But one thing is necessary." Many things are *relatively* necessary, one only *absolutely* — it is to work out your salvation, because no one else can do it for you, and your state in eternity depends upon it. You should think more of this than of anything else. Is it your first thought in the morning, your last at night? 3d. "Mary has chosen the best part, which shall not be

taken away from her." Why did our Lord prefer the part which Mary chose — contemplation? Because it will remain when action is over; because it will be an eternal source of joy to us in heaven as it was of happiness on earth; because contemplation, by revealing to us God's infinite perfections, inflames us with that love from which heroism springs. It was Mary, not Martha, who stood beneath the Cross on Calvary.

COLLOQUY with St. Jerome, the great Doctor of the Church, whose Feast is celebrated this day. Beg of him to obtain for us the grace to combine, after his example, the *active* with the *contemplative* spirit, and to attain perfection in this two-fold life.

FEAST OF THE HOLY ROSARY *

1st Prel. Picture to yourself the Blessed Virgin teaching St. Dominic the devotion of the Rosary.

2d Prel. Ask for grace to appreciate its excellence and advantages.

POINT I

THE ORIGIN OF THE ROSARY

CONSIDERATION.— For the origin of the Rosary we must go back to the year 1208. It was a time of great trouble, especially in the south of France, where the Albigensian heresy spread death and desolation around. After many vain attempts to extinguish it, St. Dominic, founder of the order of Friars Preachers, was sent to the infected country. The saint put all his trust in our Lady's protection, and invoked her day and night. His prayers were heard. She appeared to him, and taught him the devotion commonly called the Rosary, promising great and lasting results from the preaching of it. More than a hundred thousand heretics abjured their errors, and the conversion of an immense number of notorious sinners testified to the power of this method of prayer, and caused it to be adopted by the whole of Christendom. The Sovereign Pontiffs erected it into a confraternity, enriched it with many indulgences, and appointed the first Sunday in October, with a special office, for its commemoration.

APPLICATION.— This Feast is well fitted — *1st.* To strengthen our faith in a Divine Providence watching over the Church, and supporting it in proportion to the dangers which threaten it. *2dly.* To make us feel the truth of St. Bernard's remark, "God wishes that we

* This Meditation should be set aside for the First Sunday of the Month. Those which immediately follow will answer for the intervening days.

should have everything through Mary." 3dly. To increase our confidence in our Lady, and our devotion to the Rosary. Strive to reap these benefits to-day.

AFFECTIONS.— Make acts of thanksgiving to the Blessed Virgin for the favors obtained through her intercession in consideration of the devotion of the faithful to the holy Rosary; and ask her pardon for having so frequently recited it without sufficient attention and piety.

RESOLUTIONS.— To adhere to the practice of reciting the beads devoutly every day.

POINT II

THE EXCELLENCE OF THE ROSARY

CONSIDERATION.— To appreciate the excellence of the Rosary, we must think of its origin, and of the prayers and mysteries which compose it. It comes to us directly from the hand of the Mother of God. It is composed of fifteen decades of the Ave Maria, like the one hundred and fifty psalms of the Canonical Office. Each decade is prefaced by a Pater and a consideration of some one mystery in our Lord's life. The whole fifteen remind us of our duty to our Divine Redeemer; of everything necessary, I will not say for salvation, but for the highest perfection.

APPLICATION.— Are you thoroughly convinced of the beauty and excellence of this devotion, a third part of which you daily recite? The way in which you do recite it will answer my question. Do you not often say it at a time and place little suited for prayer? Thus to recite it is to say it (as a holy ascetic once remarked) rather for purgatory than for heaven. Do you not usually forget to meditate on the mysteries? To do this is to lose one great advantage of the Rosary. See in what you have been wanting, and set to work at once to amend it.

AFFECTIONS.— Pray for grace to do so, and to avoid henceforth a repetition of your past faults.

RESOLUTIONS.— To adopt those pious practices which are an assistance in saying the Rosary attentively. To lead others to understand and appreciate the advantages of this devotion.

POINT III

METHOD OF SAYING THE ROSARY

CONSIDERATION.— It is a general complaint that it is most difficult to say the Rosary with devotion, or rather without continual distractions. One cause of this is the constant repetition, even though the two prayers which compose it are the best in the world. Another cause is that, as it is said without book, there is nothing to fix the eye and arrest the attention. The way to overcome this difficulty is to bring the subject of each mystery before you as vividly as you can, and keep your mind's eye fixed upon it during the whole decade. In this way, even should your attention wander from the words or their meaning, it will at least rest upon the adorable Person of our Lord, which is all that is necessary; for the popular definition of prayer is a raising of the heart to God.

APPLICATION.— Try this method, and you will find the advantage of thus easily uniting mental and vocal prayer, and of filling your mind with holy thoughts, and your heart with sweet affections.

COLLOQUY with St. Dominic, the father and founder of the order, which has shone with such brilliancy in the Church of Christ.

PARABLE OF THE COVETOUS RICH MAN:

THE DANGER OF WEALTH

1st Prel. Listen to these words of Jesus, "Take heed, and beware of all covetousness." (St. Luke 12: 15.)

2d Prel. Ask for grace to value highly your vow of poverty, and to be entirely faithful to it.

POINT I

RICHES DO NOT MAKE PEOPLE HAPPY

CONSIDERATION.—"And one of the multitude said to Him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. But He said to him, Man, who hath appointed Me judge or divider over you? And He said to them, Take heed, and beware of all covetousness: for a man's life doth not consist in the abundance of things which he possesseth." (St. Luke 12: 13-15.)

APPLICATION.—By declining to enter into the personal question between the two brothers, our Lord teaches us, 1st. Not to interfere in our neighbor's temporal affairs, but to concern ourselves solely with his spiritual matters. Is this your practice? 2dly. To turn all such disputes to good account, by showing the nothingness of riches, their inability to make life either long or happy, and the certainty of losing them when death approaches. Happy are we if we can impress these truths upon the minds of men who are ignorant or careless of them. What a service we shall render them, especially if we can turn their thoughts to heavenly treasures! What effort have you made to do this?

AFFECTIONS.—Pray for the talents and graces necessary to enlighten and convert men, and to lead them to holiness.

RESOLUTIONS.—To remind those who are wholly occupied with the things of this world of the words of St. Augustine: "*Quidquid æternum non est, nihil est.*" "Whatever is not eternal is nothing."

POINT II

RICHES AS A CAUSE OF UNHAPPINESS

CONSIDERATION.—In illustration of the truths we have just considered, our Lord spoke this parable, "The land of a certain rich man brought forth plenty of fruits; and he thought within himself, saying. What shall I do; because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and will build greater; and into them will I gather all things that are grown to me, and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thy rest, eat, drink, and make good cheer. But God said to him, Thou fool, this night do they require thy soul of thee; and whose shall those things be which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." (St. Luke 12: 16–21.)

APPLICATION.—What a picture this is of the fate, not only of the rich who are covetous, but of the rich in general! They are really miserable. Their life is passed in calculations, schemes, anxieties by day and night. "What shall I do? Shall I close with this, decide upon that?" Then follows uneasiness; if plans miscarry, bitter regret, sleepless nights, perhaps despair. The rich know no rest, seldom enjoyment. The more their wealth increases, the more do their cares; and when they are preparing to rest and enjoy it, death comes, and all is lost.

AFFECTIONS.—Let us testify our gratitude to God, who has called us to a state of life in which we may

live happily contented with the gifts of Providence, and free from care for the future, and meet death without fear.

RESOLUTIONS.—To prove our gratitude by good works, and by fervor in the service of God.

POINT III

RICHES OFTEN A CAUSE OF ETERNAL WOE

CONSIDERATION.—We should think less of riches if we reflected on the numbers who have been eternally ruined, not by them, but by the disorders they occasion. They turn away our hearts and thoughts from God and heaven; they choke our piety, make us neglect religious duties, and insensibly lead us into avarice, injustice, luxury, hardness of heart, and final impenitence. “How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God.” (St. Luke 18:24.) “They that will become rich, fall into . . . the snare of the devil.” (I. Tim. 6:9.)

APPLICATION.—Your vow of poverty shelters you from these perils; but while you rejoice at this, remember that it is not the vow, but that which the vow supposes, which will preserve you. It is fidelity to the rule of poverty, as your order understands it. Examine yourself minutely upon this point.

COLLOQUY with St. Matthew, who, being rich, became poor, in order to follow Christ.

ON SUDDEN DEATH

1st Prel. Listen to Jesus saying, "At what hour you think not; the Son of Man will come." (St. Luke 12:40.)

2d Prel. Ask for the grace of a sweet and holy death.

POINT I

SUDDEN AND UNPROVIDED DEATH

CONSIDERATION.—The story of the rich man, and especially his sad end, had made a great impression. Our Lord took the opportunity to warn them against a surprise by death. "Be you then also ready; for at what hour you think not, the Son of Man will come." In fact, nothing is more common than sudden deaths. But are they such a great evil? Certainly not. Sudden death is often a grace, and saints have asked it of God as a favor, that they may escape those assaults which are common to a long and painful agony. It is not, then, sudden death alone which we should fear, but sudden *and unprovided* death—a sudden death in a state of mortal sin. Thus the Church does not bid us say, "A subitaneâ morte libera nos, Domine;" but "A subitaneâ et improvisâ morte," etc.

APPLICATION.—What should you do to make this prayer effectual? Never knowingly to remain in mortal sin. To do so would be temerity. Have you been guilty in this respect?

AFFECTIONS.—If you have been guilty, thank God, who, in His patient mercy, has waited for your repentance, and beg of Him to keep you always in His holy friendship.

RESOLUTIONS.—Should you have the misfortune to fall into grievous sin, seek to be reconciled with God without delay.

POINT II

SUDDEN, BUT NOT UNPROVIDED, DEATH

CONSIDERATION.—What is sudden death for the Christian, for the faithful, fervent religious? An instantaneous passage from this world to the next. What would a sudden restoration of sight be to a blind man? And yet how feeble an illustration is this of the transports of delight and joy which a holy soul must feel at its first sight of God; that God for whom it has sacrificed all so generously, in whose service it has passed so many years, borne so many humiliations, privations, sufferings; that God, whom it has always feared to offend, to whom it has constantly referred every affection, every action; whom day and night it has adored, sighing for the moment when it should see Him face to face! That moment has come. The Heavenly Bridegroom's voice is heard, "*Veni, sponsa, veni; coronaberis.*" (Cant. 4:8.) "*Intra in gaudium Domini tui.*" (St. Matt. 25:21.)

APPLICATION.—And shall we dread this moment? Shall we think of sudden death as a calamity, when instantaneously, painlessly, it gives us such unspeakable happiness? Excite in your heart a desire to see and possess your God.

AFFECTIONS.—Excite in your heart, like David, the desire to see and possess God, "*Quando veniam et apparebo ante faciem Dei?*" "*When shall I come and appear before the face of God?*" (Psalm 41:2.)

RESOLUTIONS.—To repel all thoughts of sadness in connection with the prospect of death.

POINT III

DEATH WHICH IS NOT SUDDEN

CONSIDERATION.— To judge by the ordinary course of events, your death will be preceded by an illness more or less protracted. You must, then, learn to be resigned to it, and especially to the loneliness you will then have to bear. You must learn to suffer, and that, too, more than others in the world; for you are not in a hospital, but in a community, where every one has his own work to do, and where it is impossible for the infirmarian to furnish you with those little luxuries which are lavished on the sick in hospitals.

APPLICATION.— Happy is he who, while he is still in health, accustoms himself to be left alone, and when in solitude to hold communion with God, with his guardian angel, and the saints, to bear patiently privation and neglect. If you do not learn this, your lot at the last will not be a happy one, nor will your conduct be edifying. Consider this matter, for it is most important.

COLLOQUY with St. Joseph, the patron of a happy death.

FEAST OF ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI,

FOUNDER OF THE ORDER OF FRIARS MINOR *

1st Prel. Picture to yourself the saint in heaven, surrounded by his spiritual children.

2d Prel. Ask for the true spirit of religious poverty and humility.

POINT I

THE POVERTY OF ST. FRANCIS REWARDED

CONSIDERATION.—One might almost say of St. Francis that he carried the practice of evangelical poverty to excess. When he was about twenty-five years old, his father made him renounce, in the presence of the Bishop of Assisi, his whole patrimony, because he had been profuse in almsgiving, and had offered to rebuild the Church of St. Damian, which was in a ruinous state. Francis signed the deed without a word; his clothes even he laid at his father's feet, and took his leave, saying that thenceforward he would have no other means of support than God and his providence. (1207.) From that time he lived on alms, clothed in a shepherd's cloak, and sheltered by the ruins of St. Damian. But one day, hearing these words read in the Mass, "Do not possess gold, nor silver, nor money in your purses; . . . nor two coats, *nor shoes*, nor a staff," he thought he had still too much, and, throwing away his shoes and his staff, he substituted a rope for his leathern girdle, and preached repentance. God deigned to reward so generous a sacrifice by conferring upon the saint extraordinary

* Born, 1182; died, 1226; canonized by Gregory IX., 1228. First General Chapter composed of nearly 5000 religious, 1219. Third Order, 1221. Previous to 1790, there existed more than 7000 convents, and, without including nuns, 120,000 religious of this Order.

favours. His voice was irresistible, and disciples were drawn to him in crowds. He formed them into a religious body, and Pope Innocent III. approved the rule. (1210.) Three years later they had sixty convents, built and supported by the contributions of the people, without a penny of their own. So was the poverty of St. Francis made rich.

APPLICATION.— Let us, like St. Francis, look upon poverty as the wall of religion, the root of perfection. Let us love it as a mother. Let it be our glory, not our shame. Let us carefully fulfill its every precept. Have you done so?

AFFECTIONS.— Pray for increased esteem and love for poverty.

RESOLUTIONS.— To rejoice when called on to suffer the consequences of poverty.

POINT II

THE HUMILITY OF ST. FRANCIS REWARDED

CONSIDERATION.— Think of his marvelous humility. When he was nothing more than the merchant's son at Assisi, unknown to the world, he was great in his own esteem, greedy of notice, prompt to avenge an insult. As superior-general of twelve thousand religious, admired and praised by all, he was humble, he was nothing in his own eyes, thinking himself unworthy to be raised to the priesthood, wishing only to be forgotten, scoffed at for the sake of God. What brought about this wonderful change? The light which God gave him, and which showed him that all which is good and beautiful in the world or in ourselves comes from and belongs to God. "Soli Deo honor et gloria." To us contempt; for we have nothing of our own but original sin, inclination to evil, and inability to perform a single supernatural act.

APPLICATION.— We know this well enough; it has all been explained and gone through before us. How is it, then, that it has not the same effect upon us that it had on St. Francis? How is it that we are not humble like him? Because we meditate upon these truths superficially, and soon lose sight of them. If we had them always before our eyes, we should become humble too; we, too, would make rapid progress in all virtue, of which humility is the root; we, too, would obtain special graces and special favors, for God ever gives Himself to the humble. Unite yourself, then, on this his feast to his great family, which six centuries of persecution have not been able to crush, but still remains in all its vigor with a home in every land. Beseech the saint to get you, not his ecstasies, not his stigmata, not his gift of miracles, but his love of poverty, his humility.

COLLOQUY with the saint. Offer him your congratulations, and beg of him to obtain for you in a high degree the spirit of your holy vocation, which is, beyond all else, the spirit of humility.

JESUS CURES A WOMAN.

WHO HAD A SPIRIT OF INFIRMITY EIGHTEEN YEARS

1st Prel. Picture to yourself our Lord stretching out His hand over this woman.

2d Prel. Ask for grace to derive great good from this Meditation.

POINT I

WRETCHED CONDITION OF THE INFIRM WOMAN

CONSIDERATION.— Jesus, having left Bethany, where we shall often find Him again, continued His ministry, working many miracles, and constantly doing some act of mercy. “And He was teaching in their synagogue on the sabbath. And behold there was a woman, who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years; and she was bowed together, neither could she look upward at all.” (St. Luke 13: 10, 11.) How humiliating, how pitiable a state!

APPLICATION.— The condition to which the Evil Spirit had reduced this poor woman fills us with compassion; yet in it we see but a faint shadow of the miserable state to which the spirit of avarice and impurity reduces so many Christians. It keeps them thus bound, by their thoughts and affections, to the world, to material and sensual pleasures, and so renders them incapable of raising their heart to heaven, to God, or to eternity! We see too in this a faint but sad image of the religious, whom the devil of tepidity has changed from being spiritual to worldly. In his intentions, his aspirations, there is now nothing exalted, nothing heavenly; he has become incapable of remaining in contemplation of God for long together; an invisible hand bows him down — down to earth, to the flesh. Is this your portrait? Oh! how sad if it be!

AFFECTIONS.—Pray that, through God's grace, you may never fall a victim to the snares of the demon of tepidity.

RESOLUTIONS.—To dread and shun the first approach to tepidity in the service of God.

POINT II

THE WOMAN CURED

CONSIDERATION.—"Whom when Jesus saw, He called her unto Him, and said to her, Woman, thou art delivered from thy infirmity. And He laid His hands upon her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God." (St. Luke 13: 12, 13.)

APPLICATION.—Mark the *place* and the *time* at which this miracle was wrought. It was in the synagogue, in the place set apart for common prayer, and at the hour when the congregation assembled, that the woman was cured. If she had not been regular in her attendance, she might have missed our Lord, in which case she would have remained a cripple to the end of her days. How important, then, to be punctual at the spiritual exercises of the community! We know not to which of these exercises God may have attached special favors, special graces. Miss one, and you may lose an immense blessing. Do we not sometimes allow trifling matters to keep us away? It was after eighteen years of suffering that the woman's prayers were heard at last. What perseverance! Is yours like this?

AFFECTIONS.—Like the woman healed by our Lord, let us give glory to God by humble gratitude, confidence, and boundless devotion.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will endeavor to be always first at all observances.

POINT III

THE RULER OF THE SYNAGOGUE: HIS INDIGNATION

CONSIDERATION.—While “all the people rejoiced for all the things that were gloriously done by Him,” (St. Luke 13:17,) the Pharisees were greatly annoyed. The glory of Jesus put them in the shade. To sully that, they would have stopped at nothing which envy could suggest, provided only they could make it appear that they were actuated by a great zeal for the law. In this spirit “the ruler of the synagogue (being angry that Jesus had healed on the sabbath) answering said to the multitude, Six days there are wherein you ought to work; in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath-day.” But the hypocrite could not escape the humiliation he so richly deserved. “The Lord answering him said, Ye hypocrites! doth not every one of you on the sabbath-day loose his ox or his ass from the manger, and lead them to water? And ought not this daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath-day? And when He said these things, all His adversaries were ashamed.” (St. Luke 13:14-17.)

APPLICATION.—Hypocrisy will certainly be exposed some day. Beware of it.

COLLOQUY with Jesus, the charitable true Physician for our many infirmities.

FEAST OF ST. BRUNO,

FOUNDER OF THE CARTHUSIAN ORDER

1st Prel. Picture to yourself the Saint exclaiming, "O beata solitudo!"

2d Prel. Ask for the love of silence and retirement.

POINT I

GOD'S PROVIDENCE IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE
CARTHUSIANS

CONSIDERATION.— St. Bruno, born at Cologne in the year 1035, of noble and wealthy parents, was destined to transplant into Europe, under the form of a religious order, the life of the ancient solitaries or contemplatives of the Thebaid. God insensibly led him to the execution of His designs by giving him a great love of solitude, penance, and contemplation. Of his intimate friends there were six who ended by sharing his desire for a solitary life. In the year 1084, Bruno, having resigned his canonry and the chair of theology which he held at Rheims, presented himself with his friends before Hugh, Bishop of Grenoble. The latter, who had been told by God in a vision what to do, led them into the Chartreuse, a rocky desert, covered the greater part of the year with snow and thick fog. There, far removed from every human being, (they were four leagues from Grenoble,) they built an oratory and little cells a short distance apart, and entered upon a life of penance, prayer, and contemplation, with the greatest possible fervor. Such was the origin of the Carthusian order, which has since obtained a world-wide renown, and which, after eight centuries, still exists where it was first founded.*

* The religious, who had been driven from it in 1792, re-

APPLICATION.— Recall to mind the history of your own order, and the different circumstances which led you into it. The recollection will increase your trust in God and your love for the religious state.

AFFECTIONS.— Pray for grace to render this desire efficacious.

RESOLUTIONS.— Frequently call to mind the providential circumstances of your vocation, and the graces you have thence received.

POINT II

GOD'S PROVIDENCE IN THE EXTENSION OF THE ORDER

CONSIDERATION.— Bruno and his companions would possibly have remained unknown to the world had it not been for a circumstance which God in His providence brought about for the furtherance of His designs. Pope Urban II., who at Rheims had been a disciple of St. Bruno, summoned him to Rome to ask his advice on a certain matter. The six original members of the community followed him, and all were received by the Sovereign Pontiff in the kindest manner; their way of life was approved, and a large piece of ground allotted to them within the walls. They there founded a second Chartreuse, which afterward became the mother of many others. The most famous house in Italy was that "della Torre," in the wilds of Calabria, to which St. Bruno retired, and where, on October 6th, 1101, he breathed his last.

APPLICATION.— You say that you find it so hard to be recollected, even during prayer. Perhaps, instead

turned thither in 1816. The prior of the Great Chartreuse is Superior-General of the order. This austere order, although little known in our time, reckoned formerly as many as 285 houses, of which seven only were for women. The works of St. Bruno have been repeatedly published. The most complete edition is that of Cologne, (1640).

of seeking solitude and retirement, like St. Bruno, you do exactly the reverse.

AFFECTIONS.—Excite in your heart an ardent desire of perfection.

RESOLUTIONS.—Reflect frequently on these words of the *Imitation*: “The greatest saints avoided the company of men as much as they could.”

POINT III

GOD'S PROVIDENCE IN THE PROTECTION OF THE ORDER

CONSIDERATION.—It has been remarked that of all the ancient orders the Carthusian is the only one that has not been reformed, because it never needed it. This phenomenon is a sign of a special providence over the order. It is further explained by their mode of life differing from that of every other order, in that their separation from the world is *complete*, each living in his own separate cell. Added to this, they observe a perpetual fast, silence, and abstinence, even in the case of the sick. The hair-shirt is always worn, and half of every day and night they spend in the choir. Men who live like this are not likely to become lax. Try to imitate them, at least in their love of silence and seclusion.

COLLOQUY with St. Bruno.

DEATH OF THE TEPID AND OF THE FERVENT RELIGIOUS

1st Prel. Picture to yourself Balaam exclaiming, "Let my soul die the death of the just!" (Numbers 13: 10.)

2d Prel. Ask for the light and strength to know yourself, to amend, and so to secure a holy death.

POINT I

DEATH OF THE TEPID RELIGIOUS

CONSIDERATION.—"Sickness changes no one, but shows what he is," says the author of the *Imitation*; because in sickness it is more difficult to disguise your character. See how true this is in the case of a tepid religious. What is he like in his last illness? As he always was before — exacting, unmortified, complaining, impatient, engrossed in his bodily sufferings, thinking but little of his soul, of eternity. Alas! he shuts his eyes to his danger, notwithstanding every warning. Speak to him of the happiness which death should be to a religious, of the merit he might gain by making a generous sacrifice of his life. Offer to pray with him aloud, or to read him some chapters of the *Imitation*, he doesn't care, he hardly listens. But tell him the news of the day, or of some wonderful medicine just discovered, there is no lack of interest then. It is but too plain that he meditates but little upon God or the saints, and shows no eagerness to make frequent Communions, though it could be so easily managed.

APPLICATION.—The infirmarian and others who see him are grieved to see him in such dispositions. They say among themselves, "I should not like to be as he is

in my last illness; what merit he is losing!"* Perhaps you say so too, and you would be right; but if you would not be like him then, you must not be like him in health. If you want to know what dispositions you will die in, see what you are living in; if they are like those of the sick man before you, depend upon it you will be no better than he is when your last illness comes. If reformation is needed, oh! begin it now — now, while you are well and strong!

AFFECTIONS.—Pray for grace to know yourself, and amend your life.

RESOLUTIONS.—Sometimes to repeat this meditation at the time of monthly retreat.

POINT II

DEATH OF THE FERVENT RELIGIOUS

CONSIDERATION.—In this case also the remark is true that sickness changes no one, but shows what he is; only we see it under a different aspect. How different it all is now! The more his brethren see of him, the more they esteem him. The virtues which his humility concealed are brought out now, and they see him as he is — a solidly virtuous religious, dead to the world and to himself, occupied above all with his spiritual concerns. When his illness takes a serious change, he humbly asks his superior to tell him what the doctor really thinks of his state; and if the opinion is unfavorable, he immediately makes an offering of his life to God. He is the first to speak of the

*It is here supposed that the state of the dying person is not such as to deprive him of the full use of his free-will, and that his spiritual insensibility is the result, not of illness, but of tepidity. Were it otherwise, we should commit a great fault in blaming him either for this indifference, or for any signs or exclamations of impatience wrung from him by the violence of his sufferings.

sacraments. All through his illness, his conduct is uniformly edifying; patient, resigned, grateful for every service, apparently occupied with one thought, how to make the best use of the time that remains to him. He maintains a constant union of his soul with God by pious affection, and his greatest happiness is to receive Him as often as possible in Holy Communion. If he makes any complaint, it is that he can no longer recite his prayers from his Manual, or read the Holy Scriptures, or the *Imitation*, or the Rule, especially those parts which concern the sick; but he makes up for it by asking his brothers to read them aloud, and to speak to him of Jesus and Mary, of the happiness of the religious state, and of the joys of Paradise with which our Saviour promises to reward it. During such reading and conversation, his soul appears to have a foretaste of the bliss of heaven.

APPLICATION.—This picture pleases you. You would like it to be reproduced one day in yourself. Live as a fervent religious should live, and you will have your wish. As your life is, so will your death be. Lest you should be overtaken by weakness at the last, and unable to speak, write down *now* the affections you would like suggested to you, and the passages you would like read when you are on your death-bed. If you have not done so already, do it at once.

COLLOQUY with St. Joseph, the Patron of a happy death.

JESUS DINES IN A PHARISEE'S HOUSE

1st Prel. Picture to yourself our Lord, surrounded by the other guests, all of whom are awed by His dignity and majesty.

2d Prel. Ask for grace to unite in your own person both the interior and exterior qualities.

POINT I

OUR LORD REBUKES THE PHARISEE FOR CARING ONLY FOR THE EXTERIOR LIFE

CONSIDERATION.—“A certain Pharisee prayed Him that He would dine with him. And He, going in, sat down to eat. And the Pharisee began to say, thinking within himself, why He was not washed before dinner. And the Lord said to him, Now you Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter! but your inside is full of rapine and iniquity.” (St. Luke 11: 37-39.) Under this figure, in which a man is compared to a vessel, our Lord tells us that we should on no account neglect the exterior, which all can see; but that the interior, the purity of the soul, claims our first regard; for it is this which makes a man's merit in the sight of God.

APPLICATION.—If, then, we wish to be free from all reproach, our endeavors should be directed chiefly to the formation in us of the interior spirit, but not to the exclusion of the exterior conduct. A religious who neglected the requirements of modesty and decorum in his appearance, or who thought that he need pay no regard to the usages of society, would draw upon himself and his community a general feeling of contempt, to the great injury of religion and of souls.

AFFECTIONS.—Ardent desires to attain religious perfection in the sight of God and men.

RESOLUTIONS.—To reflect often on these words of the Apostle, "For we forecast what may be good, not only before God, but also before men." (II. Cor. 8: 21.)

POINT II

THE RELIGIOUS MINDFUL OF THE "INTERIOR" LIFE

CONSIDERATION.—There are three things which go to form the devout *religious* upon whom God looks with pleasure: 1st. Purity of soul — freedom from stains of sin, not only of mortal sin, but, as far as it is possible, of venial also. The greater the purity, the more readily will God reveal and give Himself to us. 2d. Union with God by a spirit of prayer, by habitually making ejaculations, so as to be what the Apostle calls "men of God;" living by God and in God, seeing God in all things, and all things in God. 3d. Purity of intention, by which we seek only to please God, and which therefore makes our actions in some sort resemble His.

APPLICATION.—How do you stand with reference to purity of conscience, union with God, purity of intention? Do you use the means which are necessary to obtain perfection in these three things?

AFFECTIONS.—Humble yourself before God, finding that you are yet so little recollected, so little united to God, so far from being *a man of God*.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will adopt with renewed ardor every means of perfecting in myself the interior spirit.

POINT III

THE RELIGIOUS MINDFUL OF THE "EXTERIOR"
LIFE

CONSIDERATION.— People who only see the outside judge of the interior by the exterior. The religious, therefore, who is engaged in works of zeal and charity, is bound so to comport himself as to gain the respect and confidence of men, that he may win them to God. He must maintain a certain dignity; he must be modest, courteous, and free from affectation; his conversation sensible and edifying; he must be disinterested and zealous, but withal prudent and gentle. However great his knowledge, he must not lose his simplicity; he should be cheerful and light-hearted, and yet preserve the gravity of a religious; equable and gentle in adversity or under persecution; humble when prosperous or successful.

APPLICATION.— Ask God to show you in which of these qualities you have hitherto been wanting, and to give you grace and courage to acquire it. It is not easy; it requires a constant watchfulness, and yet it is of the first importance. It would be a good plan to make it frequently the subject of your examination of conscience.

COLLOQUY with your holy Founder, or with the patron of your order or congregation, that after his example, you may become a pleasing sight in the eyes of God and men, uniting in your own person the qualities of an interior and an exterior man.

PARABLE OF THE BARREN FIG-TREE

1st Prel. Picture to yourself our Lord addressing the eager multitude.

2d Prel. Ask for grace to bring forth the fruits of righteousness.

POINT I.

BARRENNESS OF THE FIG-TREE, OR OF THE SOUL OF A RELIGIOUS

CONSIDERATION.— Some Jews having told our Lord of the terrible punishment which Pilate had inflicted on certain Galileans, He took the opportunity of showing them by a parable that they and their whole nation would be not less severely punished if they did not profit by the graces which He had lavished upon them during the three years of His ministry. “A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard; and he came seeking fruit on it, and found none. And he said to the dresser of the vineyard, Behold, for these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and I find none. Cut it down, therefore; why cumbereth it the ground? But he answering said to him, Lord, let it alone this year also, until I dig about it, and dung it. And if happily it bear fruit; but if not, then after that, thou shalt cut it down.” (St. Luke 13: 6–9.)

APPLICATION.— In this parable, as the fathers remark, our Lord had not the Jews only in His mind, but those also who in future ages should become the especial objects of God's grace. You then, above all, O religious soul! should lay it to heart; for have you not been transplanted from the cold waste of the world into the garden of religion, there tended with the utmost care, watered as it were with a greater abundance of heavenly dew in a day than many others

have in weeks and months? Where, then, is your fruit? What progress have you made since your last retreat, the last monthly recollection? Alas! perhaps none—nothing but barrenness and graces wasted. Ask God to enlighten you.

AFFECTIONS.—Humble yourself before God, making acts of repentance and salutary fear.

RESOLUTIONS.—Beg increased fervor to endeavor to atone for the past.

POINT II

REPROBATION OF THE FIG-TREE, OR OF THE SOUL

CONSIDERATION.—Think of the mischief you have done through this spiritual barrenness, this tepidity. Not only have you robbed God of the honor due to Him, your Saviour of the fruit of His Passion, your neighbor of the good you might have done him, the community of the blessings which your fervor would have drawn down, your superiors of the joy you might have given them, and yourself of a wealth of merits; not only have you neglected to do the good you might have done, but your conduct has been actively and positively hurtful. Look at the matter in detail, and you will see that it has been so.

Then think of the dangers to which this barrenness has exposed your soul. "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be cut down and cast into the fire." (St. Luke 3: 9.) "The unprofitable servant cast ye out into the exterior darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (St. Matt. 25: 30.)

APPLICATION.—Among these barren trees, these unprofitable servants, who have incurred the wrath of God, there are perhaps some whom you have known, members of the same community, who have been sur-

prised by an unhappy death and cast into the flames of hell. Oh! surely this thought must inspire you with a holy fear, and induce you to examine yourself in earnest, and make generous resolutions.

AFFECTIONS.—Thank God for His long-enduring patience. Beg of Him light to know yourself, and the strength necessary to amend your life.

RESOLUTIONS.—To manifest yourself without reserve to your spiritual director, and follow his advice, that you may not fall into the snares either of groundless and discouraging fear, or of false security with regard to your state.

POINT III

THE REPRIEVE ACCORDED TO THE FIG-TREE, OR THE SOUL

CONSIDERATION.—The tender-hearted, zealous gardener, who obtained a year's reprieve for the fig-tree, represents our blessed Lord, who as man intercedes for you with His Father—"Advocatum habemus apud Patrem, Jesum Christum justum," (1. St. John 2:1,) who obtains for you a further trial, further graces.

APPLICATION.—Let this thought increase your confidence and your courage. Say with the Apostle, "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me." (Philip. 4:13.) I will profit, then, by the time and help He gives me. I will seek a director, and say to him, "Show me how to rid myself once for all of this spiritual stupor, and to bring forth fruits of righteousness in abundance. Cost what it may, I am determined to begin at once." "Dixi, nunc cœpi." (Psalm 76:11.)

COLLOQUY with your holy Angel, who is the witness not only of your faults, but also of your good resolutions.

THE PHARISEES TRY IN VAIN TO TERRIFY OUR LORD

1st Prel. Imagine you see some of the Pharisees saying to Jesus, "Depart and get Thee hence; for Herod hath a mind to kill Thee." (St. Luke 13:31.)

2d Prel. Beg the grace of courage and of confidence in the service of God.

POINT I

EFFORTS OF THE PHARISEES TO INTIMIDATE JESUS

CONSIDERATION.—Jesus was still keeping away from Jerusalem, evangelizing the countries bordering upon Galilee with great success. This was enough to stir up the envy of the Pharisees, who therefore resolved to hinder His mission, and even to make Him abandon it under some false pretext. They first assumed a hypocritical air, and said to Him, Master, we hear that Herod, who murdered John the Baptist, hath a mind to kill Thee. Save Thy life, then. "Exi, et vade hinc, quia Herodes vult te occidere." "Depart, and get Thee hence." (St. Luke 13:31.)

APPLICATION.—It is in this way that the devil, jealous of the good done by those who devote themselves to works of charity and zeal, tries to hinder their success, and even to drive them away from the place where they are doing good. Sometimes he tries to frighten and discourage them: sometimes he stirs up false brethren against them, who try to drive them away under the pretext of avoiding disagreements in the community: sometimes he endeavors, and even succeeds, in blackening them in the opinion of their superiors by intrigue or calumny. You may be the victim of these snares: great servants of God have been so, as we see in the lives of St. John of the Cross and St. Francis Regis. But they were not disturbed.

They had left their cause in the hands of God, and God sustained them in their trials, and glorified them.

AFFECTIONS.—Pray for grace to rise, through faith, beyond the reach of profane and malignant intrigues.

RESOLUTIONS.—To do right, despising threats, and patiently bearing contradictions of every kind.

POINT II

OUR LORD'S PERSEVERANCE AND FIRMNESS

CONSIDERATION.—Instead of feeling fear and terror, as the Pharisees wished, Jesus answered them, calmly and confidently, "Go and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils and do cures to-day, and to-morrow, and the third day," (St. Luke 13:32;) that is, as long as My mission in these parts requires Me. The Pharisees ought to have been impressed by this courageous answer. He said, as it were, "I do what I have willed, what is necessary for My mission. I fear no one; and I will die only at the time and in the manner that I have appointed."

APPLICATION.—The just man and the religious who conscientiously fulfill their duty ought to answer with the same courage, "I do what God wills, what obedience has laid on me. I fear Him only; and I will die at the time and in the manner He has resolved that I should die. Happy should I be if I might die a martyr to my duty and to obedience." Is this courage and constancy to be found in you? Judge for yourself: are you not often influenced and upset by fears which are generally imaginary, and induced to ask for a change of dwelling or office because you think your health will suffer, or because you apprehend many difficulties, contradictions, and annoyances? Has not the simple fear that you may not succeed before men

in the employment which has been given to you made you resort to false pretenses, that you might escape from it?

AFFECTIONS.—Ask of God a great heart, generous, self-sacrificing, and inaccessible to all fear save that of offending Him.

RESOLUTIONS.—To do right and bear patiently every species of contradiction.

POINT III

OUR LORD'S TENDERNESS FOR THE MISERY OF JERUSALEM

CONSIDERATION.—"It can not be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem." (St. Luke 13:33.) Our Lord gave the Pharisees to understand by these words that He knew the snares they had laid for Him in Jerusalem, and that there indeed He would die, but only because He so willed it. Then thinking of the terrible fate reserved for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, He cried out in grief, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered together thy children as the hen doth gather her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldst not!" (St. Matt. 23:37.)

APPLICATION.—How wonderfully is the tenderness of the Divine Heart manifested to us in these words! Let us try to form our own hearts on the model of this tender and zealous Heart. Let us try also to forget our own troubles, that we may only think how we can relieve the sorrows and needs of our brethren, of all those confided to our care.

COLLOQUY with the great Saint Francis Borgia, third General of the Society of Jesus, whose Feast we celebrate this day.

PARABLE OF THE LOST SHEEP

1st Prel. Behold Jesus, the Divine Shepherd, carrying the lost sheep on His shoulders.

2d Prel. Beg that your heart may expand with confidence and love.

POINT I

HOW THE SHEPHERD SEEKS THE LOST SHEEP

CONSIDERATION.— This touching parable is the completion of that of the Good Shepherd. Our Lord gave it in the form of interrogation to the Pharisees, who “murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them. . . . What man of you,” said He, “that hath an hundred sheep, and if he shall lose one of them, doth he not leave the ninety-nine in the desert, and go after that which is lost until he find it?” (St. Luke 15: 2, 4.) Remark the promptitude with which the shepherd seeks his lost sheep: as soon as he sees it is gone, he hastens to seek it, without taking time for food. Then consider the perseverance and the solicitude with which he seeks it — nothing discourages him, neither distance, nor accidents, nor fatigue. He never rests till he has recovered his dear sheep.

APPLICATION.— Has not God really acted thus when you were so miserable as to be lost, to be separated from Him by sin? Were you not immediately recalled by the voice of conscience, by the fear and trouble which He excited in your soul, until finally His grace triumphed over your resistance, and the efforts and deceits of the devil?

AFFECTIONS.— Admire, praise, and bless the goodness of God with regard to you.

RESOLUTIONS.— To act toward our inferiors as God has acted toward us.

POINT II

HOW THE SHEPHERD TREATS THE SHEEP HE HAS FOUND

CONSIDERATION.—When the shepherd at last sees his sheep, he gently calls it to him; and when it has come to him, far from blaming and punishing it, he caresses it and smiles on it to show he is not angry. Nor is this all; moved with compassion, seeing the sheep panting and exhausted, what does this good shepherd do? He lays it “upon his shoulders rejoicing,” (St. Luke 15: 5,) says Jesus Christ, and carries it back to the fold.

APPLICATION.—Under this image of winning tenderness, the Saviour of our souls pictures Himself; and this image is a reality. Every penitent sinner affords a proof of it: from the moment he renounces sin, and makes the resolution of returning to God, the reproaches of his conscience cease, and remorse is silent; he feels himself prevented and strengthened by a grace which is so abundant that he is more borne along than treading his way. Nothing now costs him anything: what formerly seemed impossible to him has become easy. And the joy which a priest feels at having saved a soul is communicated to his repentant heart; he tastes a peace and a happiness that he has not known for a long time. What does your own experience tell you?

AFFECTIONS.—“O quam bonus et suavis est, Domine, Spiritus tuus in omnibus.” “O how good and sweet is thy Spirit, O Lord! in all things.” (Wisdom 12: 1.)

RESOLUTIONS.—In all relations with others, I will imitate the meekness and mercy of the Good Shepherd.

POINT III

HOW THE SHEPHERD TESTIFIES HIS JOY AT HAVING FOUND THE LOST SHEEP

CONSIDERATION.—“And coming home, call together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, Rejoice with me, because I have found my sheep that was lost.” (St. Luke 15: 6.) And then our Lord Himself deigned to make this consoling application of the words, “I say to you, that even so there shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just who need not penance.” (St. Luke 15: 7.)

APPLICATION.—These divine and wonderful words teach us to appreciate the infinite goodness and mercy of God toward the penitent sinner; and they teach us, also, the injury it is to God, and the harm we do to ourselves, when, remembering our past sins, we give way to trouble, fear, and discouragement, as if the pardon we have received could be doubtful. Is not this, perhaps, what you have done? If it be so, acknowledge your fault; and if in future you are tempted to fall into it again, think of what Jesus Christ says, that your conversion has been a subject of joy in heaven among saints and angels. This thought will confirm your confidence, will expand your heart, will help you greatly to make fresh progress in perfection.

COLLOQUY with the Divine Shepherd of our souls.

THE QUALITIES OF A DISCIPLE OF JESUS

THREE CONDITIONS REQUIRED

1st Prel. Behold Jesus in the midst of a great multitude.

2d Prel. Beg the grace of knowing and practicing all that our Divine Lord requires from those who wish to follow Him.

POINT I

ESTRANGEMENT FROM OUR RELATIONS

CONSIDERATION.— Among the crowd who followed Jesus, and who listened to Him with very different dispositions from those of the hypocritical Pharisees, many manifested their desire to be numbered among His disciples. But what must have been their surprise when they heard the conditions that the Divine Master had laid down before they could be admitted! The first was, “Si quis venit ad me, et non odit patrem suum, et matrem, et uxorem, et filios, et fratres, et sorores, non potest meus esse discipulus.” “If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, he can not be My Disciple.” (St. Luke 15: 26.) That is to say, if he have not the strength to relinquish their friendship rather than that of God, if he have not the courage and determination to resist them, and even give them up, if they oppose the certain will of God in regard to a state of life.

APPLICATION.— Jesus Christ, then, rigorously demands from us who glory in being His disciples, that in all circumstances we give Him the first place in our esteem as the Sovereign Good, and the first place in our love; that we be entirely detached from the world, and that, at least, we keep our hearts free from

all affection to those persons or things who disturb our peace with Him. Has it been thus with you? What are your actual dispositions?

AFFECTIONS.—Strive to divest yourself of all inordinate attachments. Ask pardon for the faults hitherto committed on this point.

RESOLUTIONS.—Frequently to thank God, who has given you the strength requisite to break all ties of flesh and blood, in order to consecrate yourself exclusively to Him.

POINT II

HATRED OF OURSELVES

CONSIDERATION.—“Si quis non odit . . . animam suam, non potest meus esse discipulus.” “If any man hate not . . . his own life also, he can not be My disciple.” (St. Luke 14:26.) According to St. Jerome, our Lord meant that we should be ready to sacrifice our life rather than lose the faith and grace of God—that we should hate and cast away from us all that could flatter our self-love and our senses, all that is capable of soiling our soul in the eyes of God. “To hate one’s self thus in time,” says St. Austin, “is to love one’s self in eternity.”

APPLICATION.—The fulfillment of this second condition, so rigorously exacted by our Divine Master, supposes evidently two things: 1st. Great vigilance over all our senses and the most secret movements of our hearts. 2d. A continual violence against the ambitious aspirations of our minds and the disorderly inclinations of our hearts. These words of our Lord evidently suppose this: “The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away.” (St. Matt. 11:12.) Is it not because we fail in this violence and this vigilance over ourselves, that we are still so little dead to the world and its lusts, such weak disciples of Jesus Christ?

AFFECTIONS.— Beg earnestly of God self-knowledge, and, according to the meaning of His words, hatred of yourself, combined with aversion for all that is esteemed and sought by worldly men at the expense of what they owe to God and their own conscience.

RESOLUTIONS.— To exercise greater vigilance, and be more strict with yourself than you have hitherto been.

POINT III

LOVE OF THE CROSS OF JESUS

CONSIDERATION.—“ Et qui non bajulat crucem suam, et venit post me, non potest meus esse discipulus.” “ And whosoever doth not carry his cross, and come after Me, can not be My disciple.” This third condition is very easily understood; to carry the cross after Jesus is to bear patiently for love of Him all that wearies us, all that goes against our ideas, tastes, and habits; all that is in contradiction to our temper, inclinations, and customs; all that can cause us suffering of mind or body. To carry the cross after Jesus is, says the Apostle, “ bearing about in our body the mortification of Jesus.” (II. Cor. 4: 10.) It is to mortify ourselves continually in all things, so that, dead to the world and ourselves, we may live only to God.

APPLICATION.— Examine carefully how you stand as regards this spirit of mortification and this self-immolation. If you are animated by this spirit, your happiness is certain; if you are a stranger to it, you have everything to fear. Does not the Apostle say this expressly, “ They that are Christ’s have crucified their flesh with the vices and concupiscences ”? (Gal. 5: 24.) “ If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His.” (Rom. 8: 9.)

COLLOQUY with your holy patron.

ON THE VIRTUE OF MORTIFICATION

1st Prel. Imagine that you hear the Apostle saying, "Mortify therefore your members." (Col. 3:5.)

2d Prel. Beg for the knowledge, esteem, and practical love of mortification.

POINT I

NATURE OF MORTIFICATION

CONSIDERATION.—We bear about in us a strong inclination for all which pleases our senses, and from it spring numberless sins and miseries. The resistance to this inclination is what we call mortification. Mortification, then, is an act of the will, by which we repress and kill the vicious desires which spring from concupiscence. If any one does this from a supernatural motive, and has acquired the habit of doing it, he possesses the virtue of mortification. There is, then, a great difference between an act and the virtue of mortification. This virtue, like all others, has different degrees. It becomes more perfect as we acquire greater facility and perseverance in reducing it to practice.

APPLICATION.—From your entrance into religion you were taught the knowledge and exercise of mortification, because it is the foundation of the religious life, according to those well-known words of our Lord, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." (St. Luke 9:23.) What value do you put upon this virtue? what progress have you made in it? Are you not among that number who began to practice it ardently, but gradually neglected it, because it cost them a good deal, and have become strangers to the spirit of mortification?

AFFECTIONS.— Ask for grace to advance constantly in the practice and love of mortification.

RESOLUTIONS.— To resume with renewed ardor the practice of mortification.

POINT II

NECESSITY OF MORTIFICATION

CONSIDERATION.— All that is without us, as well as that which is within, shows us the absolute necessity of mortification. Without us, we have the precept and example of Jesus Christ, the doctrine and example of the Apostles, and, as we saw in the preceding Meditation, we have also the example of all the saints. Where can we find one who has not excelled in the practice of mortification? Within us, we have the experience that, if we do not at least continually and energetically fight against the irregular desires of our hearts, we fall into every kind of disorder and excess; as the Apostle reminds us, “*Si autem Spiritu facta carnis mortificaveritis, vivetis.*” “If by the Spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live.” (Rom. 8: 13.)

APPLICATION.— Without mortification, then, there is no perseverance, no salvation for us. Without mortification, it is still more evident there can be no progress in virtue. If you answer truly, must you not acknowledge that to your want of mortification it is owing that you are so inconstant in your resolutions, so far from attaining the spirit of prayer, so often unfaithful to many points of the rule and certain obligations of your office, that you give so little edification, are so wanting in charity, zeal, patience, and resignation? Examine yourself before God.

AFFECTIONS.— Acknowledge and regret your faults. Ask for the spirit of mortification.

RESOLUTIONS.—To make at times a particular examination on the virtue of mortification.

POINT III

EXCELLENCE AND ADVANTAGES OF MORTIFICATION

CONSIDERATION.—To be mortified is to die to one's self and the world, to live only to God; it is to conquer, it is to repress, the man of sin in our hearts — "*Quod habitat in me peccatum,*" "Sin that dwelleth in me," (Rom. 7: 17,) — and to let Jesus reign over us as our Sovereign Master; it is to overcome all obstacles to perfection; to destroy all that is displeasing to God in us; to love God, as the Apostle St. John expresses it, "in deed," (1. St. John 3: 18;) and finally, it is to follow Jesus, bearing His cross; it is to die upon the cross with Him, as says St. Paul, "*Christo confixus sum cruci.*" "With Christ I am nailed to the cross." (Gal. 2: 19.)

APPLICATION.—Does it need further argument to induce us to embrace with fervor the holy austerities of mortification? And can not we all, though weak in health, mortify ourselves in a number of ways? We know them; at one time we took delight in them; but now? Let us go back to our first fervor. What joy we shall have at death, and what overflowing happiness in eternity!

COLLOQUY with the holy king St. Edward, whose Feast is celebrated on this the anniversary of the translation of his body, found incorrupt thirty-six years after it had been interred. This, we may believe, was the reward of his admirable chastity, consequent on the constant practice of mortification.

THE OBLIGATION WE ARE UNDER OF MORTIFYING OURSELVES

ON ACCOUNT OF SENSUALITY

1st Prel. Imagine you hear the Apostle saying, "I see another law in my members fighting against the law of my mind."
(Rom. 7: 23.)

2d Prel. Beg the grace of becoming more and more convinced of the necessity of mortification.

POINT I

SENSUALITY IMPELS US TOWARD SIN

CONSIDERATION.—The extreme need we have of mortification arises from that evil leaven which original sin has left in our hearts, and which is nothing else than sensuality; or, as we may define it, an innate and violent inclination for all that pleases the senses or brings enjoyment to the body, and consequently an innate aversion for all that contradicts us. "*Sensus et cogitatio humani cordis in malum prona sunt ab adolescentia sua.*" "The imagination and thought of man's heart are prone to evil from their youth." (Gen. 8: 21.)

From this vicious inclination, which will last till death springs every kind of disorderly affection, which turns us away from God, our last end. He who does not vigorously resist it by a *continual* mortification will certainly be its miserable victim in time and eternity.

APPLICATION.—Alas! we feel but too keenly this vicious inclination within us; it is constantly impelling us toward disorder. *1st.* Disorder in sight: we feel inclined to look at everything, to read everything, to observe everything; in the house, the conduct of our superiors and brethren; out of it, the objects which,

strike or please the eye, and from thence springs a multitude of rash judgments, temptations, and sins. 2d. Disorder in hearing: we are curious to know all the news of the day, all that is said and done in the house, all that goes on out of the house, and rather the evil than the good: from this spring useless and prolonged visits and conversations, loss of precious time, infractions of the rule of silence, and, what is worse, criticisms, murmuring, detraction, indiscretion, and finally dissipation of mind, void of the heart, an impossibility of recollection, prayer, and meditation. 3d. Disorder in the taste, sleep, care of the body: is it not true that we feel tempted to exceed the bounds of temperance, the time given for sleep, the care which we might reasonably take of our body? Such are, then, the effects of sensuality, the disorder which it will certainly engender in all those who do not fight against it by mortification.

AFFECTIONS.—Let us beg of God, earnestly and with tears, that He would make known to us His will with regard to the practice of self-denial, and aid us by His grace to accomplish it.

RESOLUTIONS.—To manifest to our spiritual director our temptations, and even our most trivial concessions to sensuality, and be guided by his advice.

POINT II

SENSUALITY TURNS US AWAY FROM WHAT IS GOOD

CONSIDERATION.—According to the definition given, sensuality is not only that innate and violent inclination for all that pleases the senses, but also an aversion for all that wearies or restrains us. From this proceed transgressions of the rule, and the scandal which results from it, so much negligence in fulfilling

the duties of our state and our office, so much neglect of spiritual duties, and so much imperfection in all our actions, and finally lukewarmness.

APPLICATION.— It does not require any great mental effort to prove these truths; we find it within us. Let us appeal to our conscience, and ask why we do not observe such and such a point of rule or religious discipline while we observe such another? If we speak the truth, we shall answer, Because we do not dislike the one, but the other goes against our taste, character, and habits. Why have we given up and lost sight of the resolutions of our last retreat? They were founded on good motives, and well conceived to assist our spiritual progress. It is true; but they curtailed our liberty of action, they cost us too much. Why are we so often negligent in preparing and making our meditation properly, in rising promptly, in following the exercises of the community? Because we could not do violence to ourselves. These are humiliating avowals, but they should not discourage us. Let us rather take occasion from them to reanimate our ardor and to renew in ourselves the spirit of mortification and self-abnegation. The harder the combat, the more glorious the victory.

COLLOQUY with the great Saint Teresa, who carried the spirit of mortification to such an extent, this being the vigil of her Feast.

FEAST OF ST. TERESA

FOUNDRRESS OF THE REFORM OF CARMEL *

1st Prel. Imagine you hear the saint saying, "To suffer or to die."

2d Prel. Beg that she would obtain for you a great love for Jesus.

POINT I

ST. TERESA'S STRUGGLES

CONSIDERATION.—In the life of this wonderful saint, written by herself, there is a statement on which we ought to fix our attention. She says that the first twenty years of her religious life in the Carmelite convent at Avila were passed in a continual struggle against the impulse of grace, which pressed her to give up her too frequent and intimate conversations with seculars. "God," says she, "called me on the one hand, and the world drew me away on the other. My soul was always troubled. I passed twenty years in this struggle. My falls were numerous, and I rose again but slowly."

APPLICATION.—We find in this, useful instruction and great encouragement; we see: 1st. That one single affection, even though not a very disorderly one, is an obstacle to peace of soul, spiritual progress, and intimate union with God. 2d. That the saints were not of a different nature from us, nor always exempt from weakness or faults. 3d. That some of them remained for a notable time in a state of inferiority and spiritual weakness before they sprang forward

* Born at Avila, in Spain, 1515; entered religion, 1536; died, 1582; beatified, 1614; canonized, 1622; founded the first house of the reform, 1562.

and attained high perfection. 4th. How wrong we are, then, if we despair of ourselves or of grace!

AFFECTIONS.— Thank God for His patience manifested toward you.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will not defer longer the sacrifice which God requires of me.

POINT II

VICTORY OF ST. TERESA

CONSIDERATION.— “One day,” says the saint, “when by order of my confessor I earnestly asked God that He would make His own will known to me, I had an ecstasy, and I distinctly heard these words, ‘I will that for the future you converse only with the angels.’” It was the light of grace to Teresa. She gave up forever her old friends, and longed only for crosses and labors to bear for the love of Jesus. From this moment she made immense progress in perfection, and God poured His choicest gifts upon her. She became the wonder of her times; and the veneration which surrounded her name and writings subsists to this day. On the other hand, the saint obtained what she was always asking for in loving words: “To suffer for Thee, my God, or to die.” She had continual bodily suffering, and was for a long time an object of persecution from without. She was treated as extravagant, as a visionary, and a hypocrite, even as one possessed, and a heretic. Her sufferings were equaled only by her deep humility and unshaken patience.

APPLICATION.— After the example of St. Teresa, let us try to make sacrifices; let us willingly accept the crosses that it pleases God to send us, and we shall

certainly obtain a large share in the gifts of His liberality.

AFFECTIONS.— Beg of the saint to obtain for you a generous heart.

RESOLUTIONS.— To unite your own efforts to her powerful intercession.

POINT III

REFORM OF CARMEL MADE BY ST. TERESA

CONSIDERATION.— The ancient and illustrious order of Carmel, after its translation into the West, (1229,) and owing to the troubles of the times, had lost much of its primitive spirit. God inspired St. Teresa to revive it, and one of the greatest marvels of her life is that she succeeded in causing a very austere reform to be accepted, not only by women, but by men, who recognize her also as their mother. She had to overcome obstacles on all sides. She had to endure many troubles, labors, and mortifications during the last twenty years of her life, which were consecrated to this difficult work. However, her large heart, and her confidence in God, together with a wonderful skill in the management of business, carried her through it all. She had the consolation, before she went to heaven, of seeing seventeen convents of women and fifteen of men firmly established, which she had founded herself. After her death, the number greatly increased, and at this day we see the order of Carmel flourishing, producing men and women distinguished by their virtues, their talents, and their success in the sacred ministry.

APPLICATION.— Let us bless God for what He effected in St. Teresa and by her in others. Let us congratulate her, and desire that we also may do some great thing for God, or at least sanctify ourselves.

COLLOQUY with the saint.

SPIRITUAL ADVICE OF ST. TERESA

1st Prel. Behold St. Teresa writing her spiritual advice.

2d Prel. Beg the grace of making this advice the rule of your conduct.

POINT I

ADVICE BY WHICH TO REGULATE OUR WORDS

CONSIDERATION.— Among the numerous writings of St. Teresa, which are no less admirable and edifying than her life, we find the advice or the rules concerning perfection which she left as a pledge of her love to the children of Carmel. Let us profit by them, and meditate to-day on some of them.

Advice on the use of the tongue. “Speak little, especially when you are with many people. Never praise yourself, your knowledge, your good actions, or your birth, unless you have reason to hope that it may be of use, and then do it humbly, remembering that these are all the gifts of God. Never excuse yourself unless there is some strong reason for doing so. Avoid all disputes, and especially in things of little consequence. Speak to everybody with quiet cheerfulness. Never exaggerate things, nor assert anything without being very sure of it. Never speak without thinking what you are going to say, that nothing which can offend may escape you. When any one speaks on spiritual subjects, listen to him with humility. In your discourse, and in the conversations in which you have to take part, always mingle some words which treat of spiritual life; for by this you will avoid idle words and detraction.”

APPLICATION.— After having weighed the wisdom of this advice, put it in practice: see how far you act

upon it; then in what you can and will act upon it still further.

AFFECTIONS.— Pray for grace to remain faithful to your resolutions.

RESOLUTIONS.— In the daily examination of conscience, I will consider especially the faults I may have committed in conversation.

POINT II

ADVICE BY WHICH TO REGULATE OUR ACTIONS

CONSIDERATIONS.— Accommodate yourself to the dispositions of the people you have to deal with, and do all you can to gain everybody. Avoid singularity as far as possible, for it is a great evil in the community. Do everything as if you really saw God before you; for it is a sure means of making great progress in virtue. Never let the devotion you have in your heart appear, unless there is some great necessity for it. “My secret is my own,” said St. Bernard and St. Francis. Avoid curiosity in things which do not concern you; avoid hearing about them. Be gentle to others, severe toward yourself. If you are a superior, never reprove any one while you are angry, but wait till you are calm. Let your joy be always humble, gentle, modest, and edifying. Make known all your temptations, imperfections, and repugnances to your superior and your confessor, that they may give you counsel. Never eat and drink except at the appointed times. Never leave off humbling and mortifying yourself in all things until death, and have a particular devotion to St. Joseph.

APPLICATION.— These rules of conduct are not at all above my strength, and I feel what advantages I should derive from following them — peace for my own soul, and edification for my neighbor.

AFFECTIONS.—I resolve, O Lord! from this day forth, to devote myself to their practice. Do Thou deign to strengthen my good-will, deficient as it is in constancy and generosity of spirit.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will reflect on the different circumstances of the coming day, that I may see where and when I can find opportunities of putting these resolutions in practice.

POINT III

ADVICE FOR REGULATING OUR THOUGHTS AND DESIRES

CONSIDERATION.—Think during the day on what you have meditated in the morning. Often make acts of love for God. Do not think of the imperfections of others, but only of their virtues; as far as regards yourself, think only of your faults. Think that you have but one soul, that you will die but once, that you have but one life, which is short; that there is but one glory, which is eternal, and you will easily detach yourself from things of earth. Seek God in all things, and you will find Him. Let your desire be to see God, your fear be to lose Him, your sorrow not yet to possess Him, your joy all that can lead you to Him, and you will live in great peace.

APPLICATION.—Make the resolution, after a careful examination, to reform all that is contrary in you to these rules of wisdom.

COLLOQUY with St. Teresa. Beg of her to obtain for you some share in the divine lights and heavenly favors so abundantly conferred on her.

PARABLE OF THE GROAT LOST AND FOUND

1st Prel. Behold our Divine Lord speaking this parable.

2d Prel. Beg the grace of fully understanding its sense and application.

POINT I

THE GROAT IS THE TYPE OF SANCTIFYING GRACE

CONSIDERATION.— The parable of the lost groat has the same end as that of the lost sheep, but the application of the types are different. “What woman,” said our Lord, still addressing the Pharisees, “having ten groats, if she lose one groat, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently until she find it?” (St. Luke 15: 8.) Interpreters tell us that this woman is the type of the Christian who has lost sanctifying grace; but how far short is the type from the reality! The groat is but a piece of money of small value, and sanctifying grace is of infinite price; it is the price of the blood of our blessed Lord. The first can only procure us some few earthly advantages; the second can give us the right to a heavenly inheritance; and yet this woman thinks it a great misfortune to have lost her groat, and will take no rest till she hath found it.

APPLICATION.— Terrible is the blindness and misery of many Christians who have lost sanctifying grace by mortal sin; lost it for weeks, for months, for years perhaps, and who do nothing to recover it. They are indeed miserable; for in losing it they have lost God's friendship, lost the right they had acquired in holy baptism to the kingdom of heaven, and the abyss of hell is yawning beneath their feet. If death surprises them in this state, their damnation is certain. Let us com-

passionate their blindness, and make it practical by seizing every occasion of enlightening them, inspiring them with salutary fear, or at least praying for them.

AFFECTIONS.—“Enlighten,” O Lord! “them that sit in darkness,” that is, in false security, “and in the shadow of death.” (St. Luke 1 : 79.)

RESOLUTIONS.—To let no day pass without offering to God fervent prayers and acts of mortification for the conversion of sinners.

POINT II

THE GROAT A TYPE OF THE GRACE OF DEVOTION

CONSIDERATION.—In the woman in this parable we can see, in the second place, the religious who has lost the grace of devotion, or that piety and unction which made him so happy in his vocation, which made the practice of virtue so easy to him, which united him to God even in the midst of a turmoil of business, which made him find a charm not only in his spiritual duties, but even in humiliations, mortifications, and privations of all kinds.

APPLICATIONS.—There is no loss we ought to feel so sensibly as the loss of this grace of devotion, because it is the source of all our blessings. And yet in what way do we try to recover it when we have lost it? Are we not contented with groaning over or complaining of our aridity, of saying with Job, “Who will grant me that I might be as I was in the days of my youth,” (that is, my first fervor,) “when God was secretly in my tabernacle?” (Job 29 : 2, 4.) Let us do better than this; let us resume our habits of regularity, recollection, and mortification, and especially of our fidelity in performing our spiritual duties, and we shall recover the lost groat, the grace of devotion.

AFFECTIONS.—Ask of God the courage requisite to

enable you to correspond with these holy inspirations, and the strength and constancy needed for the execution of any generous design.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will shun carefully all that could deprive me of the grace of devotion.

POINT III

FINDING THE GROAT A TYPE OF THE JOY OF THE ANGELS

CONSIDERATION.— Consider the joy that this woman felt when she found the groat; she wanted to express her happiness, and so she called “together her friends and neighbors, saying, Rejoice with me, because I have found the groat which I had lost.” (St. Luke 15: 9.)

APPLICATION.— What is the truth which is hidden in this figurative language? No one would ever have discovered it if our Lord had not told it to us, because it is so astonishing. For so, He concluded, “there shall be joy before the angels of God upon one sinner doing penance.” (St. Luke 15: 10.) We may add, And also when a lukewarm religious becomes fervent again. O what an encouragement! You, then, who by your long negligence have saddened these blessed spirits, hasten to console them, and to give them joy by a prompt and perfect conversion. Great will be the blessings that will fall on yourself. Can you hesitate?

COLLOQUY with your guardian angel.

PARABLE OF THE SUPPER

1st Prel. Behold Jesus speaking this parable.

2d Prel. Beg for grace to overcome, and to help others to overcome, the three obstacles to salvation pointed out by our Lord in this parable.

POINT I

PRIDE IS THE FIRST OBSTACLE TO SALVATION

CONSIDERATION.—“A certain man made a great supper, and invited many: and he sent his servant at the hour of supper to say to them that were invited, that they should come; for now all things were ready. And they began all at once to make excuse. The first said to him, I have bought a farm, and I must needs go out and see it. . . . And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to try them. . . . And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I can not come. . . . Then the master of the house being angry, said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the feeble, and the blind, and the lame, . . . that my house may be filled. But I say unto you, That none of those men that were invited shall taste of my supper.” (St. Luke 14: 16-21, 23, 24.) Let us consider, in this parable, the type of the calling to the faith of Jew and Gentile, the three great obstacles which, according to our Lord, prevent men from partaking of the celestial banquet, eternal salvation.

APPLICATION.—“I have bought a farm; hold me excused.” The schemes for advancement, pride, and outward show, by which we wish to rise in the estimation of men, is the first obstacle to salvation. How, in truth, could God give heaven, give Himself, as a reward to those who have done nothing for Him, who have sought in all things their own glory at the expense

of that which is due to Him? “*Soli Deo honor et gloria.*” Miserable are they indeed! After having *perhaps* obtained a passing glory, they will be cast out with the refuse of the human race into the depths of hell, “an abomination to the Lord” and the saints. “*Abominatio Domino est omnis arrogans.*” Let us thank God for having shown us our true interests; and let us try to undeceive the blinded victims of pride when an occasion offers, and show them on one hand how low a thing it is thus to bow before the opinion of men, and on the other, what true greatness there is in depending only on the Master of the universe, the sole arbiter of our destinies.

AFFECTIONS.— Let us ask the grace to be ourselves deeply penetrated with these truths, in order the better to impress them on the minds and hearts of others.

RESOLUTIONS.— To seek only the triumph of God’s glory in ourselves and others.

POINT II

THE SECOND OBSTACLE TO SALVATION IS AVARICE

CONSIDERATION.— “I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them; I pray thee hold me excused.” Our Lord points out the second obstacle to salvation, cupidity, avarice, or an immoderate desire for riches. How can the avaricious think of heaven? His days and nights are passed in making calculations, in finding out ways of increasing his possessions, as if he were to live forever in this world. His god is his money. But this god can neither save him from death nor hell.

APPLICATION.— What a blessed inspiration have we received in overcoming forever this obstacle to salvation by the vow of poverty, that happy poverty which provides for all our wants, brings us such peace of

heart and is the pledge of imperishable riches in heaven! How can we show our gratitude toward God? By exercising our zeal, by trying to show men who are avaricious the vanity and deceit of the pursuit and possessions of the fleeting things of earth, and in striving to lead their desires and their activity toward the unchangeable and unspeakable possessions of heaven.

AFFECTIONS.—Thank God who has enabled you to discern the *pearl* of evangelical poverty.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will often renew my vow of poverty, and will joyfully fulfill all its obligations.

POINT III

THE THIRD OBSTACLE TO SALVATION IS SENSUALITY

CONSIDERATION.—“I have married a wife, and therefore I can not come.” In showing us this third obstacle to salvation, Jesus Christ does not condemn marriage, as the heretics try to prove: but He teaches us that the attraction of sensual pleasures leads very rapidly to the excess of impurity, and this vice so defiles the soul that the thought of heaven and the *invitation* even to labor for it becomes odious. He warns us *all* to be on our guard, that we may not be infected by this vice, and that we may labor to cure and save those unhappy beings who are defiled with it.

APPLICATION.—Let us obey the teaching of our loving Lord, and let us watch and pray that we may never be overcome by sensuality; and let us earnestly beg that He would deign to bless all that we undertake for the conversion of the miserable victims of the spirit of impurity.

COLLOQUY with our Divine Saviour.

PARABLE OF THE UNJUST STEWARD

AND THE PRACTICAL LESSONS WHICH OUR LORD TAUGHT BY IT

1st Prel. Behold the crowd pressing round Jesus and listening to Him.

2d Prel. Beg the grace of being docile, and faithful to the counsels of Jesus.

POINT I

EMBARRASSMENT OF THE UNJUST STEWARD

CONSIDERATION.—"A certain rich man," said our Lord, "had a steward, and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods. And he called him, and said to him, How is it that I hear this of thee? Give an account of thy stewardship; for now thou canst be steward no longer." The steward, who could not possibly show his accounts, was in great perplexity. How was he to subsist for the future? "What shall I do?" he said within himself. "To dig I am not able; to beg I am ashamed." (St. Luke 16: 1-3.)

APPLICATION.—I am this steward; God is that rich Master to whom everything belongs. He has confided a small but precious portion of them to my care: my body and its senses; my soul and its wonderful faculties; my time, my life, my liberty; many gifts of grace, and an infinity of creatures are placed in my possession. One day, when I am least thinking of it, He will demand a rigorous account of my administration of these possessions; and woe to me if it has not been in conformity with His will and commandments — if I have taken the fruit of these possessions for myself, instead of giving them to Him only. Are my accounts in order? If at this moment He were to call me, and

say, "Give an account of thy stewardship," should I be less perplexed than the unjust steward?

AFFECTIONS.— Ask grace to know your own state, and to regulate your accounts with God.

RESOLUTIONS.— To be always earnest in making your daily examination of conscience, as well as that which precedes confession.

POINT II

INGENUITY OF THE UNJUST STEWARD

CONSIDERATION.— What did the disgraced steward do to get out of his difficulty? He said, "I know what I will do, that when I shall be removed from the stewardship they may receive me into their houses. Therefore calling together every one of his lord's debtors, he said to the first, How much dost thou owe my lord? And he said, A hundred barrels of oil. And he said to him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty." He did the same with all the other debtors. "And the lord commended the unjust steward, forasmuch as he had done wisely; for," added our Lord, "the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light." (St. Luke 16: 4-6, 8.)

APPLICATION.— The Son of God, in giving us this parable, did not mean to approve the fraud of this steward, but to make us ashamed of the little care we give to our spiritual interests, by showing us that the children of this world are all more industrious and far-sighted in the management of their temporal affairs than the children of light—the men devoted to spirituality, *ourselves*—are in the important affair of our sanctification, our eternal happiness. After a careful examination, ought we not to acknowledge this?

AFFECTIONS.—Avowal of your faults, repentance and self-reproach.

RESOLUTIONS.—To resume those practices and pious exercises, which, in the time of my early fervor, led me to make such rapid progress toward perfection.

POINT III

MEANING OF THIS PARABLE

CONSIDERATION.—Our Divine Lord concluded with these words, “And I say to you, Make unto you friends of the mammon of iniquity, that when you shall fail, they may receive you into everlasting dwellings.” (St. Luke 16:9.)

APPLICATION.—We are poor; and how, then, can we, according to this precept of Jesus Christ, give alms to the poor, that they may intercede for us? We can do it by inducing the rich to give largely, and also by giving spiritual alms, which will, more effectually than temporal ones, enable them to reach heaven, and become our intercessors there. Besides which, faith shows us in the souls in purgatory poor people far more worthy of compassion than the needy we have before our eyes, because they can not help themselves. Do we not neglect to give them alms, to come to their assistance?

COLLOQUY with St. Peter of Alcantara, whose Feast is celebrated this day.

CONTINUATION OF THE PRECEDING MEDITATION

The Preludes as in the preceding Meditation.

POINT I

FIDELITY IN LITTLE THINGS

CONSIDERATION.— Jesus Christ taught several practical lessons from the parable of the unjust steward, which, taken in a wide sense, and relatively to us, contain also maxims in spiritual life. We will meditate on two of them. “He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in that which is greater.” (St. Luke 16: 10.) These few words teach us how much we should have at heart fidelity in little things as the constant rule of our conduct. There are many motives to induce us to this. 1st, Motives as regards God. Our first and highest duty is to love God, and give Him proofs of our love and fidelity; doing His holy will in the smallest things is giving Him these proofs, and giving them to Him constantly, almost perpetually; for little things make up the days and minutes. 2d, Motives as regards others. We all wish to gain many souls, to save the most hardened sinners; but that is impossible unless we have extraordinary graces; and that we may obtain them, we should be generous toward God, faithful in the smallest things, and our success will be certain. 3d, Motives as regards ourselves. Our Divine Lord tells us that “he that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in that which is greater;” that is, in great trials, in strong temptations. And the following words are still more consoling, “Well done, thou good servant; because thou hast been faithful in a little, thou shalt have power over ten cities.” (St. Luke 19: 17.)

APPLICATION.— Let us weigh carefully the truth of these different motives, and make an act of faith on each of them; then go into detail about your life, and ask yourself whether your conduct is in conformity with these truths — how far you are habitually faithful in little things.

AFFECTIONS.— Ask of God the courage requisite for constant fidelity in little things.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will occasionally make a particular examination on fidelity in little things.

POINT II

UNFAITHFULNESS IN LITTLE THINGS

CONSIDERATION.—“ He that is unjust in that which is little is unjust also in that which is greater.” (St. Luke 16: 10.) This sentence, coming from the lips of the infallible Truth, ought to convince us that habitual infidelity to those points of rule which we count of little importance is very hurtful to us, and may bring fatal consequences to ourselves and many others. 1st, We lose an immense treasure of merit for ourselves and for many others. 2d, By it our soul incurs many stains which we do not see, but which disfigure it in the eyes of God. 3d, It is a great obstacle to the operations of grace, to God’s liberality toward us. 4th, It brings in relaxation; the bad example of one entices many others, and perhaps ends in universal irregularity. This is the real explanation of what history tells us of the decay or even total ruin of certain communities which had for a long time edified the Church.

APPLICATION.— We should think most seriously upon this matter, and examine ourselves carefully; and, however it may be with others, take to ourselves those words of Jesus Christ, “ He who is unjust in that which is little is unjust also in that which is

greater;" and if we have any negligence to reproach ourselves with, to correct ourselves from this day forward.

AFFECTIONS.—Regrets for the past. Humble prayer.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will watch more diligently over myself.

POINT III

THE REASON OF OUR NEGLECT OF LITTLE THINGS

CONSIDERATION.—Since we are all convinced of the great importance of being exact, even in the slightest details, how does it happen that we so often neglect "the little things"? It is because constant faithfulness requires a continual effort and sacrifice on our part, both of which are distasteful to our weak human nature: this is the real cause. We endeavor to deceive ourselves, however, and to still the voice within us, by saying, as the indifferent and lukewarm do, "Sanctity does not consist in little things. I am no longer a novice. Petty details are not suited to my position; the essentials are all that I need look after. The little things do well enough for those beneath me," etc., etc.

APPLICATION.—Let us reject these detestable maxims, so opposed to the words of "eternal truth," "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in that which is greater." "He that feareth God, neglecteth nothing." (Eccles. 7: 19.) Let us adopt, in place of them, the words and examples of the saints. "No one," says St. Francis Xavier, "can excel in great things who does not first excel in small ones." "I would rather be torn in pieces," says blessed John Berchmanns, "than willfully break one of my rules."

COLLOQUY with that blessed young man, who sanctified himself by his great and constant fidelity in little things.

FEAST OF ST. URSULA

1st Prel. Behold the saint in heavenly glory in the midst of a great company of virgins, who bless her as their mother.

2d Prel. Beg for the spirit of faith, zeal, and generosity that St. Ursula had.

POINT I

ST. URSULA HAS THE GLORY OF VIRGINITY AND
MARTYRDOM

CONSIDERATION.— St. Ursula was born about the year 360, in the island of Great Britain, where Christianity was then flourishing. Her father was Dimnoc, King of Cornwall, and she was well educated. God blessed her with His grace. She made rapid progress in virtue, and dedicated her virginity to God. However, her father promised her in marriage to Conan, a Breton prince, who by force of arms had obtained possession of one of the fairest provinces of Gaul, now called Brittany.

Ursula had to embark against her wish, in company with a great many young maidens destined to marry the nobles and warriors, among whom Conan had divided his new states. But God had accepted the vow of the saint, and He willed that she should be faithful to it until death. The fleet which carried the virgin train was cast by a storm on the northern coast, near the mouth of the Rhine, and they fell into the hands of the Huns, an idolatrous and cruel people. Gaunus, their chief, attracted by the beauty of Ursula, endeavored to make her apostatize, that he might marry her. The saint boldly declared that she was the spouse of Jesus Christ, and that she and her companions would die a thousand times rather than be unfaithful to the vows of their baptism. Then the love of the barbarian changed to hatred, and he ordered his soldiers to put

them all to death. It was thus that Ursula's head was adorned with the double crown of virginity and martyrdom.

APPLICATION.— Let us admire and adore the conduct of God toward His elect. He leads them by marvelous ways to their last end. He knows how to turn to His purpose both the fury of the elements and of the wicked. You see it in this instance, and believe it. Why, then, do you let yourself be so easily cast down and discouraged?

AFFECTIONS.— Ask, through the intercession of these holy martyrs, lively faith and boundless confidence in Divine Providence.

RESOLUTIONS.— In time of trial to speak and act in conformity with our faith.

POINT II

GLORY OF ST. URSULA'S APOSTOLATE

CONSIDERATION.— St. Ursula had that happiness, rarely given to women, of gaining the crown of an apostolate, as well as those of virginity and martyrdom. She instructed the maidens who were gathered around her, and strengthened them in the faith and love of Jesus Christ and of chastity. Her zeal bore abundant fruit; for when the hour of trial came, all remained faithful unto death. St. Ursula thus won the glory of having preserved them from ruin, made them children of God, and martyrs who are venerated and invoked by the whole world. And the glory of St. Ursula's apostolate did not end with her life; it pleased God to perpetuate it in those numerous communities of virgins who, under the name of Ursulines, devote themselves zealously and successfully to the education of youth, preserving thousands of young persons from

the snares of the world, and making them children of God. The spirit of St. Ursula, so faithfully adopted by her followers, is thus communicated to their successors.

APPLICATION.— Let us try to preserve and perpetuate in ourselves the spirit of the founder, the patron or patroness of the order to which it has pleased God to call us, and we shall live a holy life; and if we are devoted to education, our zeal will be blessed. Let us ask ourselves, then, sometimes, if we have not degenerated from this spirit. And that we may avoid such an evil, let us often read the life of our founder, let us take the constitutions and rules he has given us for the subject of our meditation, and gaze upon a picture which recalls to us his features or his memory; and to these easy methods let us join prayer. Make the resolution of doing this.

COLLOQUY with the glorious Saint Ursula. Unite with her children in heaven and on earth in congratulating her. Beg of her to obtain for us the grace never to fall away from our holy vocation.

THE APOSTOLATE OF EDUCATION

1st Prel. Imagine you see St. Ursula instructing and exhorting the vast multitude of young people who have been confided to her care.

2d Prel. Beg for the necessary talent and zeal to enable you to instruct and exhort profitably.

POINT I

EXCELLENCE OF THE WORK OF EDUCATION

CONSIDERATION.— In the preceding Meditation we suggested some thoughts on the education of youth, to which the nuns of St. Ursula were the first religious women who devoted themselves. At the present day the number of educational orders far exceeds the contemplative. It is the want of the age; and if you are employed in this good work, rejoice; for it is the most excellent of all zealous labors. Education forms men, molds generations, decides the fate of individuals in time and eternity, the fate of families and of kingdoms. Good education gives worthy priests to the sanctuary, legislators and just magistrates to the state; it supplies good children to families, and forms those who are fitted to be the heads of households; it gives protectors to religion, and saints to heaven. There are other works of zeal, more striking to the eye than the instruction of children and the education of youth; but none more solid, more fruitful, more worthy of the esteem of God and men.

APPLICATION.— Keep these thoughts always before your mind, and you will not be so easily overcome by *ennui* or despondency, nor seduced by the temptation of giving up education or the direction of young people under the pretext of using your talents better in other ways.

AFFECTIONS.— If engaged in the work of education, beg of God the grace to devote yourself to it with all your heart.

RESOLUTIONS.— To be ready to spend your entire life in teaching, should such be the will of God.

POINT II

MEANS OF SUCCEEDING IN THE WORK OF EDUCATION

CONSIDERATION.— The difficulties of giving a Christian education to youth are almost equal to its excellence. To insure its success, we must have more than a good will; we must use the necessary means; we must obtain help from God by an ardent charity, a profound humility, and a great purity of conscience and intention; we must be men of prayer, that grace may sustain our courage and enable us to conquer obstinate, indolent, and very passionate natures; we must be closely united to our superiors by obedience, and to our companions by charity, so that there may be perfect unity in our ways of judging and acting; we must be exemplary, so that our life should preach and persuade more than our words, and should contribute to give us authority; we must devote ourselves entirely to the special branch that is given us, no matter what attraction we may feel for other labors or other studies; in one word, we must be men of abnegation, devotion, and sacrifice.

APPLICATION.— See in what way you fail under these different heads.

AFFECTIONS.— Beg of God to assist you to acquire those virtues in which you are deficient.

RESOLUTIONS.— To spare no exertion in the cause of education.

POINT III

PRECAUTIONS TO TAKE IN THE WORK OF EDUCATION

CONSIDERATION.—The work of education, especially for those who enter on it while young, is not without its dangers. Many have fallen victims to these; therefore, that you may not share their fate, be on your guard: 1st, Against the attraction you feel for some pupils in particular; there is but one step between that and misplaced affections and familiarities. 2d, Against dissipation, from whence flow lukewarmness and the loss of the religious spirit. 3d, Against the disgust which various contradictions will cause, and which, if you do not take care, will lead to disgust with your vocation. What you ought most especially to avoid in this important work is partiality, fickleness of temper and conduct, extreme severity and excessive indulgence, anger, harsh language, humiliating remarks, especially in public; want of punctuality in the hours for assembling; want of preparation for what you have to say or teach; routine, or a want of ingenuity in exciting emulation.

APPLICATION.—Often make an examination on the details contained in this third Point.

COLLOQUY with St. Ursula. Beg of her to obtain for us, and for those associated with us in the apostolate of education, the happiness of leading many souls to heaven.

PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON

1st Prel. Behold the prodigal son tearing himself away from the arms of his desolate father.

2d Prel. Beg the grace of becoming more and more attached to God and your vocation.

POINT I

DEPARTURE OF THE PRODIGAL SON

CONSIDERATION.—"A certain man," said our Lord, "had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of substance that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his substance. And not many days after, the younger son, gathering all together went abroad into a far country." (St. Luke 15: 11-13.) The elder son staid with his father. Who was this father, and who were the two sons to whom our Lord refers? The father is God, and the two sons, says St. Jerome, (Ep. ad Dam., 146,) represent the two classes into which men are divided—those who remain faithful to God and only desire to live happily under His law, and those who are unfaithful and who want to enjoy unlimited liberty. The prodigal represents the second class; and his misfortunes ought, as our Lord thought, to instruct us and inspire us with a great fear of abusing our liberty.

APPLICATION.—Have you always belonged to this first class? Has there not been a period in your life when, abusing your liberty, you were living in habitual sin, far from God and heaven, in continual risk of passing into an eternity of misery? God has preserved you from this misfortune; and He has done more—He has opened your eyes, and called you to a state of life where you have many means of repairing your losses and ingratitude. How do you profit by these means?

AFFECTIONS.—Thanksgiving, repentance, desire to labor and suffer much for God.

RESOLUTIONS.— To resume with renewed ardor the practice of penance.

POINT II

DELUSION OF THE PRODIGAL

CONSIDERATION.— The young man, finding himself in possession of a large fortune, entirely independent, in a country where he was not known, thought himself at the height of happiness. Now he would enjoy himself; no more restraint; every desire of his heart could be satisfied. Such were his delusions. But what happened? “And,” says the parable, “he there wasted his substance, living riotously. And after he had spent all, there came a mighty famine in that country, and he began to be in want. And he went and cleaved to one of the citizens of that country. And he sent him into his farm to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.” (St. Luke 15: 13–16.)

APPLICATION.— The Son of God thus places before our eyes the heartrending picture of a man who thinks he has found happiness by forsaking the divine law to lead a sensual life; and we may also say it is the picture of a religious forsaking his first fervor, freeing himself, and trying to find in creatures, in the satisfaction he gives to his senses, a remedy for the disgust he feels. But what happens? After having in a short time wasted an immense treasure of grace and merit, he feels in his heart a terrible void, which nothing can satisfy, and his mind is filled with sensual and impure thoughts, of which the swine in the parable are a fruitful image. He has no peace or rest by night or day. Such is the fate of him who seeks his happiness far from God. Have you not unfortunately experienced something of this kind?

AFFECTIONS.—“Redde mihi lætitiām salutaris tui,

et spiritu principali confirma me." "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation; and" in the struggle against my passions, "strengthen me with a perfect spirit." (Ps. 50: 14.)

RESOLUTIONS.—To dread the slightest concession to passion.

POINT III

THE DEGRADATION OF THE PRODIGAL

CONSIDERATION.—Besides the hunger and nakedness which the prodigal had to endure, there was the memory of his former position to crown his misery, the thought of his degradation, which was greater than that of those who had formerly been his servants. "How many hired servants in my father's house," he said, "abound with bread, and I here perish with hunger?" (St. Luke 15: 17.) Keeper of swine, an outcast from human society!

APPLICATION.—"Behold," cries out St. Peter Chrysologus, "the fate reserved for a man who no longer wishes to have God for his Father." How degraded he is! "Assimilatus est jumentis insipientibus:" like "the beasts of the field," says the Psalmist. (Ps. 48: 21.) You have not gone down so low, or you have been quickly raised up from this abasement; but since by your religious profession you are raised above the rest of men, are you always faithful to your high vocation? Do you not sometimes feel humbled in seeing that the faithful in the world find abundant and delicious nourishment in prayer and communion, while you, perhaps, find in them nothing which pleases and strengthens you? Oh! let it not be said of you that you are dying with hunger in the midst of abundance!

COLLOQUY with your guardian angel.

THE PRODIGAL SON: CONTEMPLATION

1st Prel. Behold the prodigal sitting on a dunghill surrounded by swine.

2d Prel. Beg for a great fear of anything that will separate you from God.

POINT I

THE PRODIGAL SON IN HIS FATHER'S HOUSE

CONTEMPLATION.— Represent to yourselves, in a valley pleasantly shaded with foliage, a spacious house, where peace and affluence abound. There the prodigal son lived in company with a kind and loving brother, under the authority of the best of fathers. What a happy position Providence had given him! Exempt from care, abundantly provided with all that was necessary for the maintenance of life and cultivation of mind, sharing in the general esteem which his father had won, he only knew the miseries of this world from the lips of others.

APPLICATION.— Is this not a faithful image of the happiness of the religious life? Do not we also live under the shadow of the sanctuary, far from the cares of the world, with brethren full of charity, under the paternal direction of superiors, who carefully provide for all our wants of body and soul? “O my brothers!” a holy religious used frequently to cry, “let us know how to appreciate our vocation, and we shall lead a joyful and holy life; we shall be always loving and esteeming it more; and this love and esteem for our vocation will assure our perseverance, and will cause us to make great progress.” He spoke the truth. If the prodigal had known how to appreciate his happiness, he would never have dreamt of leaving his father's roof.

AFFECTIONS.— Let us pray earnestly for a continual

increase of esteem and love for our holy and blessed vocation.

RESOLUTIONS.—In moments of sadness, say to yourself, O my soul! what a happy and holy life thou mayest lead here. “*Quare tristis es, anima mea, et quare conturbas me?*” “Why art thou sad, O my soul! and why dost thou trouble me?” (Ps. 41:6.)

POINT II

THE PRODIGAL FAR AWAY FROM HIS FATHER'S HOUSE

CONTEMPLATION.—Let us now contemplate the prodigal in a very different position. He has dissipated his fortune; his evil companions have abandoned him; he finds himself alone, lost, as it were, in a strange country, which is devoured by famine. Vice and hunger have changed him completely. Pale, thin, haggard, and clothed in rags, look at him in this wretched state, amidst a crowd of beggars, holding out his hand for charity, but generally receiving nothing but rebuffs and contempt. What misery!

APPLICATION.—If unhappily you have become lukewarm, you will see the pitiable state of your soul in the person of this young prodigal. Consider, point by point, all that renders him worthy of pity, and you will find the image of the miseries of your soul. This sight will touch you; you will have pity on yourself, and you will feel the necessary courage and energy to rise out of lukewarmness.

AFFECTIONS.—Ask for grace to do so triumphantly.

RESOLUTIONS.—To dread above all else, and carefully shun, whatever may tend to sin or tepidity.

POINT III

THE PRODIGAL SON DEPENDING ON HIS MASTER

CONTEMPLATION.—Who is this master that the prodigal had? A sordid, avaricious man, without compassion for him who came begging for a morsel of bread. He refused him a lodging, he made him pass days and nights among the swine; he even refused him a share in the food that was given him to feed these vile animals with. What a change, what a heartrending picture! This young man once so honored in his country, waited on so carefully by a numerous household, sitting day by day at a sumptuous table, is now seated on a dunghill, without help from any one, despised by everybody, dying with hunger in the midst of swine.

APPLICATION.—In what lively colors does our Lord paint the abasement and miseries of those who reject His mild and honorable yoke to take service with that pitiless tyrant, the world! And is not this the folly of the greater number of men? Perhaps it was once yours, but light has dawned in your heart, you have seen your error, you have come back to the Lord your God. Attach yourself more and more to Him. Make Him forget your past unfaithfulness by your redoubled fervor in His holy service.

COLLOQUY with St. Augustine, who, until his thirtieth year, led the life of a prodigal, but who, after his conversion, loved God the more ardently as he had more grievously offended Him. Beg of him to obtain for you a share in the sentiments of contrition, humility, charity, and zeal which distinguished him until his latest breath.

Or else with the archangel Raphael, whose feast the Church celebrates this day.

THE PRODIGAL SON CONTINUED

1st Prel. Behold the prodigal son bathed in tears in his father's arms.

2d Prel. Beg that your heart may be expanded by confidence and love.

POINT I

RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL SON

CONSIDERATION.— Passion blinds us, but adversity teaches us, and makes us look into ourselves. We see the proof of this in the prodigal. “*In se autem reversus,*” “And returning to himself,” says our Lord, he understood how sinful and miserable he had been to abandon his father. He began to feel remorse, and it was the moment of grace for him; he corresponded with it; he considered what means he should take to rise out of his misery, to save his failing life. He could only see one — that of returning to his father and imploring his pardon. He instantly took the resolution and put it into execution. “*Surgam et ibo ad patrem meum.*” “I will arise, and will go to my father, and say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee; I am not now worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants:” he acted on his resolution, “and, rising up, he came to his father.” (St. Luke 15: 18–20.)

APPLICATION.— What does the Divine Author of this parable mean us to learn from this? 1st, That the contradictions, humiliations, and troubles of conscience which we have sometimes to endure, are the means which God uses to make us look into ourselves, and to help us to rise out of the miserable state of languor in which our soul lies. 2d, That in these moments, far from giving way to distrust and discouragement, and

thus making our condition worse, we ought rather to consider the means of escaping, and take practical resolutions. 3d, That we may be sure to obtain from God strength and perseverance to execute them, we should go to Him not as our Judge, but as our Father. To call Him by the name of *Father* disarms divine justice, and it brings back confidence into our hearts.

AFFECTIONS.—Acknowledge your faults, ask forgiveness of your distrust.

RESOLUTIONS.—In all troubles, and in difficulties and pains of conscience, I will turn to God as to a Father, to Him who is “*Pater misericordiarum, et Deus totius consolationis.*” “The Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort.” (II. Cor. 1 : 3.)

POINT II

THE RECEPTION OF THE PRODIGAL SON

CONSIDERATION.—How was the prodigal received by his father? The Lord tells us: “*Cum autem adhuc longe esset, vidit illum pater ipsius.*” “When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him.” At first he did not know him, he was so disfigured by misery; but as soon as he recognized him, says our Lord, he “*miser cordia motus est,*” “was moved with compassion,” and ran to him. Then the child fell on his knees, and with a voice broken with sobs made his confession, “*Pater, peccavi.*” “Father, I have sinned.” But the father would not let him finish: he saw that he was penitent, and that was enough; he raised him, “*cecidit super collum ejus, et osculatus est eum.*” “Fell upon his neck, and kissed him.” (St. Luke 15 : 20, 21.)

APPLICATION.—This good and tender father, our Lord meant for no other than the Lord our God, our true Father, whose service we have chosen forever. Oh! how wrong we are, then, when we torment ourselves to no purpose, and do God an injury by giving

way so often to servile fear; when we close up our hearts or doubt about our pardon, or that our past sins are forgotten, as if we were the slaves of a harsh and vindictive master!

AFFECTIONS.— Acknowledge that you have done wrong, and ask pardon.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will henceforth bring to the service of God a heart expanded with confidence, love, and joy.

POINT III

FESTIVAL GIVEN TO THE PRODIGAL SON

CONSIDERATION.— See, in this third Point, how our Lord finishes the picture He has given us of His Heavenly Father in the father in this parable. After having given his penitent son a full pardon and forgotten the past, he chose to reinstate him in all his rights as a son. He called his servants, and said to them, “Bring forth quickly the first robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and make merry; because this my son was dead, and is come to life again; was lost, and is found.” (St. Luke 15: 22–24.)

APPLICATION.— Every trait of goodness is reproduced to the letter in the conversion of this sinner. God was not contented with forgiving him all; He gave him back all that he had lost — the *robe* of baptismal innocence; the *ring*, or the pledge of His friendship; the *shoes*, that he might walk firmly in the way, or grace to persevere; and the right of sitting down at the eucharistical banquet, where he could be filled with blessings and unspeakable delights. Let us redouble our love and generosity for a God who is so good, so liberal.

COLLOQUY with our Heavenly Father.

ON THE INFINITE GOODNESS OF GOD

MANIFESTED IN PREVENTING GRACE

1st Prel. Behold the goodness of God in the father of the prodigal.

2d Prel. Beg the grace of growing in gratitude and love for God.

POINT I

INCOMPLETE IDEA OF GOD'S PREVENTING
GOODNESS

CONSIDERATION.—Let the parable of the prodigal help us to form an idea of God's goodness revealed to us by preventing grace. The father of the prodigal gives us only an idea of it; it is as a faint ray of sunshine compared to the sun at noonday. The extreme goodness of this father in the parable, which touches us and often moves us to tears, only shows us a part of God's mercy, and that the least part; it is the mercy which *recovers*, but not the mercy which *prevents*; it is God pardoning the penitent sinner, it is not God *seeking* the ungrateful and obstinate sinner.

APPLICATION.—Nothing captivates our heart so much as kindness, nothing predisposes us so much in favor of any one as receiving proofs of kindness from him. Why, then, is it that our hearts give themselves to God with so much difficulty, that we love Him so little? It is because we do not know Him enough, because the memory of His goodness to us is not often enough before our minds. We can easily imagine what feelings of love the prodigal child must have had for his father, who received him so tenderly and gave him so generous a pardon; but has not our Heavenly Father a thousand times more right to our love, when He has first loved us, and has sought us and brought us back when we were rushing to our ruin?

AFFECTIONS.— Acknowledge and repent of your past coldness. Declare your love for God.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will strive to make acts of charity not only in words, but from my heart.

POINT II

A MORE COMPLETE IDEA OF GOD'S PREVENTING GOODNESS

CONSIDERATION.— If the type of God's *preventing* goodness had been complete in the parable of the prodigal, and if God had been entirely represented in it, the father would have followed his son in his mad career; he would have gone to seek him in that distant country whither sin had led him; he would have come to him in the midst of his wanderings or his miseries, not to reproach him, but to beg him to return, to offer him his home and his possessions, to beg him, to press him, to implore him to accept them; for such is the action of that grace that we call *preventing*. Jesus Christ did not go so far as this in the parable, because to suppose such goodness in an earthly father would have been unlike the reality; for this goodness belongs only to our Heavenly Father, in whom all is infinite.

APPLICATION.— How many great sinners who have returned to God can bear witness of this truth! Perhaps you have been yourself conquered by the preventing grace and infinite goodness of God, or you have followed, as a director of souls, its marvelous operations in others; and you have exclaimed, in the depths of your heart, "The Lord is good!"

AFFECTIONS.— Praise, bless, and adore the infinite goodness of God.

RESOLUTIONS.— Endeavor to induce others to participate in your sentiments.

POINT III

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO GIVE A COMPLETE IDEA OF GOD'S
GOODNESS

CONSIDERATION.— Now, however extraordinary the excess of the divine goodness we have just considered may seem, it falls far short of the reality. No figure and no comparison can give a complete idea of it, for the simple reason that God's goodness is *infinite*, and our intelligence is essentially *finite*.

APPLICATION.— We ought, then, to admire and adore the depths of this attribute of God's love as an impenetrable mystery which can only be believed by faith. In our conversations and instructions, sermons and exhortations, let us try to make God better known. We do not do it enough; and let us admit we do it only superficially and coldly.

COLLOQUY with our Lord. Beg of Him to bring us to the knowledge of His Father, of "the treasures of His goodness, patience, and longanimity," as the apostle says, and to assist us to make Him known to men, and to love Him above all things.

PARABLE OF THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

1st Prel. Behold the rich man in hell crying out, "I am tormented in this flame." (St. Luke 16: 24.)

2d Prel. Beg the grace of making this Meditation very fruitful.

POINT I

THE PARABLE

CONSIDERATION.— Our Lord shows us in this parable one of those rich worldlings whose happiness consists in the enjoyments of life, and who have no pity for the suffering. "There was a certain rich man," He said, "who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and feasted sumptuously every day." And then He shows us a poor man in suffering, but pious and resigned. "And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, who lay at his gate, full of sores, desiring to be fed with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table, and no one did give him: moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. And the rich man also died, and he was buried in hell." (St. Luke 16: 19-22.)

APPLICATION.— This striking contrast between different classes — great wealth and extreme poverty — we see in our own days; and it will always exist. But what was rarely seen among the Jews we see on all sides among us — many rich people poor in spirit, very generous toward the needy; and many poor people very pious, and wonderfully patient and resigned; from which we may certainly conclude that the final end of both these classes will be a happy one.

AFFECTIONS.— Let us consider that this great result is due only to the gospel of Christ, which requires of

the rich that they should share their goods with the poor, and teaches the poor to acquire merit by enduring suffering with patience and resignation.

RESOLUTIONS.— Strive to confirm and utilize these pious sentiments and convictions in your relations with both rich and poor.

POINT II

INTENTION OF THE PARABLE

CONSIDERATION.— It is evident by the context that Jesus Christ gave this parable that He might destroy that prejudice that existed among the Jews — that prosperity in this world was the proof of virtue and its reward, and adversity or poverty the punishment of sin; from which they drew the conclusion, 1st, that he who was born or became miserable was a sinner, and unworthy of pity, as we see from the history of the man born blind, (St. John chap. 9;) 2dly, that man's greatest happiness consisted in possessing the good things of this world. Modern prejudices do not go as far as this; but is the thirst for riches and enjoyments less? Does it not turn many Christians away from the path of salvation, and lead them to hell?

APPLICATION.— Upon us falls the mission of enlightening and undeceiving the victims of those blind prejudices which lead them to eternal ruin. That our mission may be successful, let us try in our intercourse with them to fill their minds with those eternal truths on which we meditate so often; and to say we have no opportunity of doing so is to accuse ourselves of want of zeal. Do we deserve such a reproach?

AFFECTIONS.— Let us beg of God to increase our faith and zeal.

RESOLUTIONS.— To neglect no opportunity, even in

familiar conversation, of leading men's minds to thoughts of faith.

POINT III

THE FRUIT OF THIS PARABLE

CONSIDERATION.—What fruit ought we in particular to derive from meditation on this parable? A sovereign contempt for all that ends with time, and is worth nothing in itself for eternity; such as the pleasures of life, the favor of men, the renown gained by talent, superiority, remarkable deeds, success in the management of affairs; and, on the other hand, a great esteem for virtue, humiliations, and sufferings endured to please God and to atone for our sins.

APPLICATIONS.—If, then, from want of talent, or health, or success in studies or business, you are put in an inferior place, out of the way, looked down upon in a manner, while perhaps you have to endure great corporal sufferings, take care not to give way to depression, despondency, or murmuring; think rather that God in His mercy deals thus with you that you may have occasions of practising patience, humility, and resignation, and of laying up an immense treasure of merits for eternity. Give thanks, then, to God, and esteem yourself happy. See what there is to correct in your judgment and in your conduct.

COLLOQUY with your guardian angel.

THE RICH MAN IN HELL

1st Prel. Imagine you hear Jesus Christ say, "Et sepultus est in inferno." "And he was buried in hell." (St. Luke 16:22.)

2d Prel. Beg of God that you may never lose a salutary fear of Him.

POINT I

THE THOUGHT OF HELL

CONSIDERATION.—Yesterday's meditation on the fate of the rich man in eternity directs our thoughts to hell. Let us dwell on this thought. We ought sometimes to meditate on it, so that it may be engraven in our minds, and keep us in a salutary fear of God. For we also, though we may be religious, though we may be priests, might have moments of darkness, of delirious passion, when *only* the fear of eternal torments can keep us to our duty. This, doubtless, is why our Lord so often spoke of hell in instructing the people, and even the Apostles in particular.

APPLICATION.—We can also make this meditation on hell a help to our spiritual progress. St. Francis Borgia found it aid him in attaining great virtues. Placing himself in spirit on the borders of the abyss, and fixing his eyes on the awful number of angels and men whom sin had cast in there, he said to himself, "There is thy place, Francis; there is the torment thou hast deserved." From this, the saint gained that wonderful humility, that profound contempt of himself, whose record in his life seems past belief. From this he gained that mistrust of his own light, that love of obedience and direction in the smallest things, that he might not, as he said, "fall into the snares of the devil;" from this proceeded his unshaken patience in the hardest trials of his life, and his mortification and penances carried almost to excess; from this proceeded

that continual increase of fervor and charity; the flames of hell kindled in him the fire of divine love; from this he gained a zeal by which he was consumed, and which made him undertake great things for the salvation of others. Let us imitate the saint. The contemplation of hell, *made in this way*, will cause us to make progress in every kind of virtue.

AFFECTIONS.— Give thanks to God, who has placed before you such a useful subject of contemplation.

RESOLUTIONS.— To profit by it to the utmost extent.

POINT II

THE TORMENT OF HELL

CONSIDERATION.— As it is absolutely impossible for us to form an exact idea of the things of a future life, and particularly of hell and of all the torments the damned souls have to endure, we should meditate carefully on the words of the sentence which Jesus Christ will pronounce at the great Judgment-day on the lost: “Discedite a me, maledicti, in ignem æternum.” “Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire.” (St. Matt. 25: 41.) Depart from Me! Hell is then, the loss of God, the eternal separation from Him, the only and infinite happiness of the life to come. The damned can never have even a consoling thought. *Cursed!* — cursed by God, of a God who will have no further mercy on them. Cursed in their souls, in the memory and understanding; remorse and despair at having lost heaven for vain, vile, criminal, and shameful things. Cursed in their bodies, in every bodily sense at once — in their sight, hearing, smell, and taste. Into everlasting fire! To die slowly consumed by fire is a cruel death, but to live in fire without ever dying! what a life, what an eternity!

APPLICATION.— Beg of God that these terrible

truths may be engraven in your mind; it will preserve your compunction, distrust, and contempt of self; it will make you victorious over your passions, humble in prosperity, generous, and courageous in all that is painful to nature in your vocation and office; it will be the pledge of your final perseverance, of your eternal salvation.

COLLOQUY with the holy Apostles Simon and Jude, who enlightened many barbarous nations, and saved numerous souls from hell. The Church celebrates their Festival, with great solemnity, this day.

AFFABILITY, GENTLENESS, AND ZEAL OF JESUS

1st Prel. Behold our Lord laying His hands on little children.
2d Prel. Beg the grace of showing forth in yourself the virtues of Jesus Christ.

POINT I

GENTLENESS OF JESUS

CONSIDERATION.—A fact that the Evangelists tell us, as if incidentally, shows us how affable and gentle our Divine Lord was, and that He was always the same — always gracious and easy of access. While He was engaged in a grave discussion with the Scribes and Pharisees on the laws of marriage and the prerogatives of virginity, “then were little children presented to Him, that He should impose hands upon them and pray.” It was evidently an ill-chosen time on the part of the mothers. “And the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said to them, Suffer the little children, and forbid them not to come to Me.” (St. Matt. 19: 13, 14.)

APPLICATION.—Affability, or that habit of receiving and listening to those who come to us at all times with composure and gentleness, is a very precious and necessary quality, not only for superiors in regard to their subjects, but for religious who are devoted to works of zeal and charity. Do you fail in this respect? Is not your manner often cold, sometimes disagreeable and repulsive? Perhaps you are gentle and affable to strangers, but harsh or dry toward your brethren and your inferiors.

AFFECTIONS.—Acknowledge and regret your faults. Offer some pious aspirations.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will strive to be calm and self-possessed, mild and courteous to all, particularly when overwhelmed with business.

POINT II

TENDERNESS OF JESUS

CONSIDERATION.—Our Divine Master not only allowed these mothers to approach Him and present their little children, but He chose to manifest His interest and fatherly tenderness toward these little ones. “And embracing them, and laying His hands upon them, He blessed them.” (St. Mark 10: 16.)

APPLICATION.—How great was the tenderness shown by our dear Lord! He saw in each of these children the living image of His Heavenly Father—a soul of infinite price created for heaven, but coveted by the devil. You may also feel tenderness for the children you have to guard and educate, but is it founded on supernatural motives? is it animated by faith? is it free from all admixture of over-natural, earthly, or sensual affection? Watch over yourself on this point; distrust yourself. Those who were more confirmed in virtue than you are have been led, little by little, into errors which were terrible for themselves, and terrible for the body to which they belonged.

AFFECTIONS.—“From the snares of the devil, deliver us, O Lord!” (Litany.)

RESOLUTIONS.—I will be prudent, distrusting myself, and striving constantly to maintain the simplicity of my original intention.

POINT III

ZEAL OF JESUS

CONSIDERATION.—There is another circumstance of this presentation of little children to our Divine Lord to be remarked. He took occasion from it to exercise His zeal for the surrounding multitude; for immediately after saying, “Suffer the little children to come

to Me," He added, "for of such is the kingdom of God. Amen I say to you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall not enter into it." (St. Mark 10:14, 15.) By these words our Lord warned His hearers against the example of the proud and obstinate Pharisees, and exhorted them to listen to His divine teaching, and follow it with the simplicity and docility of a child.

APPLICATION.— After the example of Jesus, do you seek and seize upon occasions of prosecuting the salvation of others and of your brethren? Is this zeal shown in your conversations and correspondence? What good can often be done by a few words said to the purpose! And you have neglected to do this good. God will demand an account from you of it. Try, then, to repair the past.

COLLOQUY with our Divine and loving Saviour. Ask of Him that simplicity which, although natural in a child, must be supernatural in us; that blessed simplicity which Jesus recommends, when He says, "Be ye, therefore, wise as serpents, and simple as doves." (St. Matt. 10:16.) Simplicity with regard to God, consisting in purity of intention; with regard to our superiors, in perfect candor toward them; and with regard to our brethren, in sincerity, manifesting itself in all our relations with them.

PARABLE OF THE PHARISEE AND PUBLICAN

1st Prel. Behold the Pharisees listening spitefully to the words of Jesus.

2d Prel. Beg the grace of listening to His words with joy, and profiting by them.

POINT I

THE PHARISEE'S PRAYER

CONSIDERATION.— Under the type of the parable which forms the subject of this Meditation, Jesus, while He confounded the Pharisees, gave us most profitable instruction: let us try to draw fruit from it. “Two men,” said He, “went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a Publican. The Pharisee, standing, prayed thus with himself: O God! I give Thee thanks that I am not as the rest of men—extortioners, unjust, adulterous, as also is this Publican. I fast twice in a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.” (St. Luke 18: 10–12.)

APPLICATION.— In this pretense of a prayer made by the Pharisee, our Lord shows us certain marks and effects of pride which escape the eye of man, but which are very guilty in the eyes of God; such as esteem of ourselves at the expense of others whom we depreciate; a secret satisfaction in our good actions—even our penances, our acts of humanity, and the special favors bestowed on us by God’s liberality. Is there nothing of this in you? Examine and see, for this is a subtle matter. It was a subject of continual alarm, even for great saints. Do you think you should fear self-love less than they did?

AFFECTIONS.— “Domine, fac ut videam.” “Lord, grant that I may see” into the inmost recesses of my heart.

RESOLUTIONS.— In temptations to vainglory, I will say, My God, have mercy on me; I have not yet acquired humility, without which there is no virtue. Thus I will turn the temptations to profit, making of them an opportunity for an act of humility.

POINT II

THE PUBLICAN'S PRAYER

CONSIDERATION.— That the odious pride hidden in the Pharisee's prayer might be still more thoroughly exposed, our Lord contrasts with it that of the Publican, one of those men whose profession caused them to be generally looked upon as sinners. "And the Publican, standing afar off, would not so much as lift up his eyes toward heaven, but struck his breast, saying, O God! be merciful to me a sinner!" (St. Luke 18: 13.)

APPLICATION.— Our Lord gives us, in this Publican, a model of prayer. The most essential quality for prayer is humility; and there was humility in his choice of a position, humility in his whole demeanor — with his face bent toward the ground, he struck his breast as though he were a criminal before his judge; there was humility in his words — he acknowledged that he was guilty, and had no other title to pardon than the divine clemency. It is humility, then, a profound conviction of our misery, which makes our prayers pleasing to God and efficacious. Is it not, perhaps, because you have not this conviction in the depth of your heart, or that it is not sufficiently rooted there, that your prayers are so feeble and produce so little effect?

AFFECTIONS.— Beg of God the grace to keep always before you the thought of your own nothingness and misery.

RESOLUTIONS.— Often reanimate your confidence, reflecting on these words of Ecclesiasticus, "*Oratio humilitantis se nubes penetrabit.*" "The prayer of him that humbleth himself shall pierce the clouds." (Ecclus. 35: 21.)

POINT III

THE JUDGMENT PASSED BY OUR LORD ON THE PRAYERS OF THE PHARISEE AND PUBLICAN

CONSIDERATION.— It is probable that the Jews, who saw these two men enter the temple to pray, thought that one had made a wonderful prayer, pleasing to God, because they had a high idea of his sanctity; while the other had only made it as a matter of form, and gained no merit. But the judgments of God, who sees the heart, are different from those of men. What did our Lord say? "I say to you, This man" (the Publican) "went down into his house justified, rather than the other; because every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." (St. Luke 18: 14.)

APPLICATION.— Let us take care, then, not to judge by appearances, for they are often deceitful. Let us also be far from leaning on the judgments of men, or seeking consolation from them, or think we are safe only because our brethren or our superiors have a good opinion of us. Let us remember it is God who will judge us, and go straight to Him, asking Him, often in the simplicity of our hearts, that He will show us what is displeasing in us to Him, and what He desires from us; so that we may destroy the one and acquire the other. What joy we shall have at death, if we have acted in this way!

COLLOQUY with our Divine Lord.

VIGIL OF ALL-SAINTS

1st Prel. Behold the saints in glory.

2d Prel. Beg the grace of obtaining due dispositions with which to celebrate the great feast of to-morrow.

POINT I

THE COMBATS OF THE SAINTS

CONSIDERATION.— The saints were not born saints, but they became such. Children of Adam, as well as we are, they had to struggle against the inclination of their own hearts, and against the attractions of vice. Many of them, besides, had to choose between their conscience and the most terrible threats of impious and powerful men. They resisted, they fought, determined to die rather than to commit iniquity. “*Potius mori quam foedari.*” “Rather die than live dishonored.” Such was their war-cry. Truth sustained them and made them invincible.

APPLICATION.— What encouragement there is in these thoughts! The saints were not better off than I am. Many had more violent passions to overcome than I have, and greater obstacles to surmount. I have as many means of sanctification as they had, or rather, as a religious, I have stronger and better means than many of them had. Why is it, then, that I do not resemble them more? Because I have been weak or cowardly in the combat; because my will lacks energy, for sanctity requires a strong will, and we must do violence to self. “The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away.” (St. Matt. 11: 12.)

AFFECTIONS.— Reiterated acts of faith in these truths.

RESOLUTIONS.— To resume the struggle with renewed energy, and to combat particularly your predominant fault.

POINT II

THE VICTORIES OF THE SAINTS

CONSIDERATION.— The saints were ardent in their combat, and persevering in their efforts; they persevered to the end, fulfilling the condition to which Jesus Christ has attached the victory: "He that shall persevere unto the end, he shall be saved." (St. Matt. 10:22.) They triumphed over everything—the ridicule, seduction, and threats of the world; the malice and rage of the devils; all the torments invented by the hatred of tyrants; and, what is still more difficult, over the weakness and inclination of their own hearts.

APPLICATION.— What we generally are wanting in is not a good will, not good resolutions, but fidelity in carrying them out — *perseverance*. To what high perfection you would now have attained if you had faithfully carried out the plan of life laid down for you during your novitiate, or even the resolutions made in your annual retreats! But, alas! our resolutions, far from holding good for one year, can not do so for one day. Does it not often happen that you have lost sight by noon-day of the purpose that you formed in the meditation of the same day?

AFFECTIONS.— Surprise, shame, and horror at your own inconstancy. Humble supplications.

RESOLUTIONS.— Have recourse to fresh practices of piety, in order to obtain grace to keep your resolutions.

POINT III

THE HAPPINESS AND GLORY OF THE SAINTS

CONSIDERATION.—To-day we must chiefly meditate on the reward of the saints. Let us remember how they fought, how they persevered, and how Almighty God at length admitted them to taste and see the bliss promised to those who endured to the end. The rewards of God partake of His nature; and our most lofty imaginations are but the shadow of the glories and the joys prepared for us above. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him." (1. Cor. 2:9.)

APPLICATION.—These thoughts will serve to inflame and strengthen us. We shall be ready to exclaim with St. Paul, that "the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come that shall be revealed us." (Rom. 8:18.) Far from allowing ourselves to be overcome by difficulties, we shall, as did St. Francis Xavier and St. Teresa, sigh after humiliations, trials, and sufferings. Let this be the fruit of our meditation and our preparation for All Saints', offering our fasting and abstinence for the same intention.

COLLOQUY with the saint whose name you bear. Ask through his intercession, 1st, a share in the courage and perseverance which gained him a celestial reward; and, 2d, grace to appreciate that reward, and to enjoy it eternally in company with him.

FEAST OF ALL-SAINTS

1st Prel. Represent to yourself the glory and happiness of the saints in heaven.

2d Prel. Ask for grace to conceive their bliss.

This festival speaks of heaven. Let us go there in spirit; let us try to form some idea of it.

POINT I

HEAVEN EXCLUDES ALL EVIL

CONSIDERATION.—Supposing a stranger called together the inhabitants of a certain parish, and told them that, after having made the tour of the world, and crossing unknown seas, he had at length discovered an island, free from all extremes of heat and cold, enjoying a uniform temperature, a soil so fertile that it needs no cultivation, where evil passions are unknown, and where there is neither pain, sickness, old age, nor death, would not his hearers think that his discovery was neither more nor less than a beautiful dream or a poetical imagination!

APPLICATION.—But this beautiful dream, this poetical imagination, really exists in heaven, as our faith tells us. “Death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow,” (Apoc. 21:4,) are the words of St. John in the Apocalypse. Oh! if heaven were no more than this, it would not be surprising that men should be willing to make the greatest sacrifices in order to attain it, nor that those who heard and believed the stranger’s tale should sell all they had, and embark at once to that fortunate island, to escape infirmity and death!

AFFECTIONS.— Acts of faith, contempt for the world, desire of heaven.

RESOLUTIONS.— To occupy yourself during the day with these thoughts and affections.

POINT II

HEAVEN CONTAINS ALL GOOD

CONSIDERATION.— In heaven we shall possess God, an Infinite Being, comprehending in Himself all possible perfections; thus our happiness will be likewise perfect — perfect as regards all the faculties of the soul, memory, and understanding; our thoughts sweetened and purified beyond our conception; our knowledge superior to that of the most learned here below; our will satisfied by the instantaneous accomplishment of every desire; perfect also as to the senses of our bodies; glorified like that of our Lord after His resurrection. All that can charm the eye, delight the ear, the taste, or smell will be ours without measure or fear of excess, for concupiscence will no longer exist.

APPLICATION.— Thus our happiness will be perfect in heaven, so we say and believe, we, envying the saints who are in possession of it, yet strange to say, clinging the while to this miserable world, our place of exile. How little we think of the joys above! Oh! if like St. Paul we had been caught up into the third heaven, and tasted its delights, were it only for a moment, what a change would it make in us! We should care for nothing on earth; we should languish and sigh after heaven alone.

AFFECTIONS and RESOLUTIONS as in the preceding Point.

POINT III

HEAVEN INSURES US THE ETERNAL POSSESSION OF ALL
GOOD

CONSIDERATION.— Our appreciation of the unspeakable bliss promised us in heaven must be infinitely heightened by the thought that we shall enjoy it forever without fear of loss or change. But will not this endless enjoyment produce weariness or satiety? Away with such an idea! God being infinite, and His beauty and excellence infinite, the blessed will always be able to discover in Him fresh perfections and fresh sources of joy, which will be inexhaustible, for the finite can never exhaust the infinite.

APPLICATION.— If we allow such thoughts to sink deeply into our minds, we shall long, as the saints did, for heaven. We shall exclaim with the Psalmist, "Who will give me wings like a dove, and I will fly and be at rest?" With St. Paul, "I desire to depart and to be with Christ;" and with St. Ignatius, "How vile appear the things of earth when I contemplate those of heaven!"

COLLOQUY with the Holy Virgin, Queen of all Saints. Congratulate her. Beg of her to obtain for us an increase of lively faith and ardent charity, contempt for the things of earth, good-will manifesting itself in works, and an ardent desire to attain the happiness of our heavenly home.

FEAST OF ALL-SOULS

WHY AND HOW WE SHOULD HELP THE HOLY SOULS

1st Prel. Place purgatory before your eyes.

2d Prel. Ask for true devotion to the holy souls.

Reasons for helping these holy souls:

POINT I

AS REGARDS ALMIGHTY GOD

CONSIDERATION.— These souls are exceedingly pleasing to God, being united to Him more intimately by sanctifying grace than the greatest living saints whose salvation is yet uncertain, whilst theirs is assured. The beatific vision is theirs already; and God would permit them to enjoy it at once, absolving them from all debts contracted by sin, were it not for His eternal decree, by virtue of which the time of their expiation can be shortened by prayer alone. He Himself asks our prayers in the name of the love He bears to these exiled souls. Can we refuse Him?

APPLICATION.— Thus it is clear that Almighty God has in a certain sense placed the fate of these holy souls in our hands, and that, if we show ourselves unmindful of them, we neglect God Himself. Surely none of us would run the risk of incurring such a reproach. Let us on this solemn day renew our fervor in behalf of these suffering souls. We have many means of helping them — so many partial and plenary indulgences to be gained so easily. Do you make use of them? Do not hesitate, for in doing so you lose nothing and gain greatly.*

* See note, July 16th, on the Indulgences of the Scapular.

AFFECTIONS.—Adore the infinite justice of God, who detests and chastises the slightest stain of sin, even in His chosen children. Awaken in your heart a steadfast will to avoid all sin, and to assist efficaciously the souls in purgatory.

RESOLUTIONS.—To add to my good intention for this day that of gaining as many indulgences as possible, and applying them to the suffering souls.

POINT II

REASONS DRAWN FROM THE STATE OF THE HOLY SOULS THEMSELVES

CONSIDERATION.—1st. Because they suffer so grievously. St. Thomas tells us the least pain endured in purgatory surpasses all that the martyrs endured. And not only do they suffer grievously, but for so long a time — during centuries, as we may see from the Church permitting perpetual commemorations in their behalf. 2dly. Because they can do nothing for themselves. 3dly. Because they so beseechingly entreat our help. 4thly. Because they ask it in the name of charity, in the name of our Lord, who in some sort suffers in them, saying, “I was in prison, and you did not visit Me.” (St. Matt. 25:43.) 5thly. Because many of them appeal to your justice, to your gratitude; they are your relations, your friends, your benefactors.

APPLICATION.—The truths laid down by the doctors of the Church in respect to the holy souls teach us not to limit our charity in their behalf. Some of the faithful have engaged themselves by vow to make over all their good works to the souls in purgatory. Benedict XIII. has approved of this heroic act, and, what is more, encouraged it by three special favors. 1st. Wherever a priest who has made it celebrates,

the altar is privileged. 2dly. All the faithful can gain a plenary indulgence every time they communicate, and on every Monday they hear Mass. 3dly. All these indulgences can be applied to the souls in purgatory.

AFFECTIONS.—“That Thou grant eternal rest to all the faithful departed, We beseech Thee, Lord, to hear us.” (Litany.)

RESOLUTIONS.—Renew your ardent desire to assist the souls in purgatory; and impress it, as far as possible, on others.

POINT III

REASONS AS REGARDS OURSELVES

CONSIDERATION.—Charity toward ourselves as well as toward our neighbor should induce us to help the holy souls. Both in life and death we receive immense advantage from so doing. 1st. In thinking of the rigorous justice of God, we acquire a deeper hatred of sin and a stronger motive for expiating our past offenses. 2dly. We make friends and advocates for ourselves with God. 3dly. We shorten our own purgatory; for our Lord Himself says, “Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy.” (St. Matt. 5:7.)

APPLICATION.—Begin by offering up your Communion and the indulgence attached for the holy souls; then consider what you will add for the future to what you have hitherto done in their behalf.

COLLOQUY with the saints in Paradise. Beg of them to assist our pious prayers.

ON DEATH

1st Prel. Imagine a religious on his death-bed.

2d Prel. Ask that you may obtain from the thought of death a strong desire of leading a holy life.

POINT I

THE MYSTERY OF DEATH

CONSIDERATION.— From the souls in purgatory we are brought to-day to the thought of death, so nearly are the two subjects connected. We all know that we shall die only once; that on this death of ours our eternal salvation depends; that thus it is the most momentous business of our whole existence, and should therefore be our chief concern during life. But the mystery is, that it is not so; that, on the contrary, we think of nothing so seldom as of death; and if the thought comes into our minds, we chase it away as unpleasant and untimely.

APPLICATION.— Is not this really the case as concerns yourself? Can you say that at least once a week you seriously ask yourself the question, "Were I to die now, what should I fear or hope? how should I wish to have lived?" Perhaps you answer in the negative; perhaps even when the death of one of your brethren brings your own end before you, you instinctively turn away from the unwelcome idea, saying, "I am still young, or perhaps I am older than he who is gone; but I am strong and healthy, I need not think about dying yet."

What folly! What can be its cause? for to every effect belongs a cause. But is not the true cause this: that if we seriously and frequently thought of death, we should feel obliged in conscience to live in a more

holy and mortified manner, which we are not disposed to do? Let us be sure that while we banish the thought of death, we only enjoy a false peace, which can serve no good end.

AFFECTIONS.— Surprise and indignation at your own blindness.

RESOLUTIONS.— To think often on these words of the *Imitation*: “Blessed is he that has always the hour of his death before his eyes, and every day disposes himself to die.” (I. Book, c. 23.)

POINT II

PREPARATION FOR DEATH

CONSIDERATION.— To-day for me, to-morrow for thee. Imagine that this to-morrow has come for you; that you are stretched motionless on your death-bed, your life ebbing away from you, and your soul on the point of appearing before its Judge. Then ask yourself two questions: first, have I nothing which troubles my conscience at this awful hour, which makes me fear the sight of God? Oh! if you answer yes, do as you would wish to have done then: lay your doubt before your confessor in all simplicity, and follow his advice confidently. Second question: ask yourself an account of your past life. Will you not be forced to exclaim, as so many others have done, “Would to God I had been a more fervent and more mortified religious! How many my omissions, how great my negligence, sin, and folly! O Lord! give me back health, allow me time for penance, and I will live differently, and atone for what is past!”

APPLICATION.— Collect your thoughts. Beg of God to enlighten you. Examine in order: 1st. What thought, word, or deed you would wish to recal-

toward God — in regard to your vows — to your brethren — to your employment. 2d. How you wish you had performed your spiritual exercises. 3d. In what virtue are you especially deficient. . . . What sacrifice God requires of you. Then, availing yourself of these gleams of light, take RESOLUTIONS based on them. Put them in writing briefly, and lay them at once, through the hands of Mary, at the feet of your future Judge, who is now so good and merciful.

COLLOQUY with the Blessed Virgin. Reflect on these words, "Pray for us, poor sinners, now, and at the hour of our death."

PARABLE OF THE LABORERS

IN THE VINEYARD, IN ITS LITERAL SENSE

1st Prel. Behold our Divine Lord.

2d Prel. Ask for grace to obey His will.

POINT I

THE CALL OF THE LABORERS

CONSIDERATION.—Our Lord says in this parable that “The kingdom of heaven is like to an householder, who went out early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard; and having agreed with the laborers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And going out about the third hour, he saw others standing in the market-place idle; and he said to them, Go you also into my vineyard, and I will give you what shall be just; and they went their way. And again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did in like manner; but about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing, and he saith to them, Why stand you here all the day idle? . . . He saith to them, Go you also into my vineyard.” (St. Matt. 20: 1–7.)

APPLICATION.—In the literal sense of this parable, the master of the house is Almighty God, the Father of the whole human family; the vine the human family, bearing within itself the promised Messiah; the laborers the patriarchs, prophets, judges, and teachers sent by God, during successive ages of the world, to keep alive in the hearts of men the advent of that expected Messiah; whilst the penny agreed upon as their hire is redemption — the heaven opened by that Messiah, and promised by Him to all who have diligently labored.

AFFECTIONS.—Let us recognize, adore, and bless

the goodness and providence of God with regard to His vineyard, or mankind, at all times, and during every vicissitude which it has undergone. Why have men profited so little of all this care, of these numerous graces? Why have I not corresponded more generously and constantly with the favors conferred on me at different periods of my life? Reflect on them singly.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will, from this day forth, endeavor to correspond more fully with God's grace.

POINT II

THE PAYMENT OF THE LABORERS

CONSIDERATION.—“When evening was come, the lord of the vineyard saith to his steward, Call the laborers, and pay them their hire, beginning from the last even to the first.” (St. Matt. 20:8.) This inversion in the order of payment is interpreted as a prophecy of the fact, according to the words of our Lord, that the last shall be first, and the first last; that though the Jews were called first into the kingdom of God, they shall nevertheless be the last to enter it as a nation, because they will resist to the end of time the light of grace, a small number alone excepted. Thus our Lord adds, “Many are called,” (that is, all the Jews,) “but few chosen” (St. Matt. 20:16) out of their number amongst the elect.

APPLICATION.—This is the true sense of the well-known verse, “Multi enim sunt vocati, pauci vero electi.” “Many are called, but few chosen,” which, falsely applied to Christians, has too often discouraged pious souls. If you have been amongst them, see your error, and take care, if it is your duty to instruct others, that you give this, the true meaning.

AFFECTIONS.—Thanksgiving to God, who, through holy baptism, has numbered you amongst His elect, His disciples, the children of His Church. Pray for the conversion of the Jews.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will strive that my gratitude may be proportionate to the favors I have received.

POINT III

MURMURS OF THE LABORERS

CONSIDERATION.—"When, therefore, they were come, . . . they received every man a penny: but when the first also came, they thought that they should receive more; . . . and they murmured against the master of the house, saying, These last have worked but one hour, and thou hast made them equal to us, that have borne the burden of the day and the heats; but he, answering, said to one of them, Friend, I do thee no wrong; didst thou not agree with me for a penny? . . . Is it not lawful for me to do what I will? is thy eye evil because I am good?" (St. Matt. 20: 9-15.)

APPLICATION.—Our Lord predicts the murmurs of the converted Jews which we read of in the Acts of the Apostles, when they saw the Gentiles received into the Church on the same footing as themselves. Let us learn to avoid all pretension, and to have a horror of every species of jealousy.

COLLOQUY with St. Charles Borromeo, who so industriously cultivated the vineyard committed to his care. His Feast is celebrated this day.

PARABLE OF THE LABORERS

IN THE VINEYARD: ITS MORAL ACCEPTATION

Preludes as in the preceding Meditation.

POINT I

THE CALL OF THE LABORERS

CONSIDERATION.— This vine — the care of the Master of the household, Almighty God — is our soul, created in His own image, made fruitful by the blood of His Son. He gives it over to us; He exhorts us from the morning of life to its close to cultivate it with all diligence, that it may yield the fruits of holiness in abundance, stimulating our zeal by the hope of a reward eternal as to its duration, infinite as to its objects. What powerful motives to incite us to this labor in youth, in manhood, and old age!

APPLICATION.— How have you labored during your youth in the world? in religion? in the novitiate? in your studies? in the various employments confided to your charge? If your early years are not all spent, redouble your diligence in making a good use of them. If you are at the sixth or ninth hour, more advanced in life, fully occupied at home or abroad, beware lest dissipation or tepidity make you forget the interest of your soul. On the contrary, strive to become more and more fervent.

AFFECTIONS.— Lament your past faults, and ask pardon for them.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will endeavor now to confirm those habits which in later life I shall wish to have acquired.

POINT II

PAYMENT OF THE LABORERS

CONSIDERATION.— Remark that the laborers are not paid “*cum sero autem factum esset,*” “till evening was come.” God does not reward the labors of life until its close — at the hour of death, or rather in eternity, which we reach through death. Life ought not to seem long; it is, after all, but a day which is quickly passed. “One day with the Lord is as a thousand years,” in the words of the Apostle St. Peter, “and a thousand years as one day.” (II. St. Peter 3:8.) Observe, besides, that the steward is commanded to call *all* the laborers, and that all receive the same wages, which signifies that all the elect will be admitted alike into heaven, and will equally share its bliss according to their several capacities, though at the same time their capacities may be infinitely varied. We may also learn, from seeing that those who had worked but one hour received the same wages as those who had borne the labor and heat of the day, that it is the fervor, and not the number of years we have spent in religion, which is of value in the sight of God.

APPLICATION.— Renew your fervor at this consoling thought, and do not be discouraged if you have only given yourself entirely to God late in life.

AFFECTIONS.— Acts of faith in each and all of the truths comprised in the foregoing reflections.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will strive to be henceforth fervent in proportion to my past tepidity.

POINT III

MURMURS OF THE LABORERS

CONSIDERATION.— Who are those who murmur? They who were called the first, and who labored the whole time. Wherefore do they murmur? Because the others received the same as themselves, and even seemed to be preferred to them, being the first summoned for payment.

APPLICATION.— Here is a lesson for those who have grown old in religion, and who stand in danger of falling into certain defects, such as vanity, an eagerness for distinction and privileges, suspicion, jealousy, ill-humor, and, what is worst of all, spiritual lukewarmness induced by decay of bodily strength.

Let us guard against these defects by watchfulness and prayer, saying with David, "Cast me not off in the time of old age: when my strength shall fail, do not Thou forsake me." (Psalm 70:9.)

COLLOQUY with our Father who is in heaven, the good and kind Father of all the family of mankind.

ON ZEAL FOR SOULS

1st Prel. Imagine our Lord saying, "Go you also into my vineyard."

2d Prel. Ask for grace to understand the grandeur and merit of zeal.

POINT I

NOTHING IS GREATER IN THE SIGHT OF GOD THAN
ZEAL

CONSIDERATION.— In the exercise of zeal, we spread and build up the kingdom of God by gaining Him new subjects; we thus co-operate with God the Father in the work of creation, by teaching men to know, love, and serve Him; with God the Son in the work of redemption, by making fruitful that blood He poured out for the salvation of man; with God the Holy Ghost in His office of Sanctificator, by strengthening the elect in love of virtue and hatred of sin. In the words of St. Denis the Areopagite, "*Omnium divinorum divinissimum est cooperari Deo in salutem animarum.*" "Of all divine things, the most divine is to co-operate with God in the salvation of souls."

APPLICATION.— Let us rejoice if we are called to this exercise of zeal, in which all is great and nothing small, if we consider the end in view. The distinctions which we may be sometimes tempted to draw between teaching children or grown persons, rich and poor; between preaching in a cathedral or in a country village; between attending the death-bed of a beggar or of a noble, are nothing more nor less than vanity. Have we never made any of these distinctions, so unworthy of the faith we profess, and so often injurious in their consequences?

AFFECTIONS.— Acts of thanksgiving to God, who

has placed you in a position where you may exercise your zeal. Pray for grace to turn it to good account.

RESOLUTIONS.— To employ yourself from choice in those works of zeal which are least calculated to attract notice, and which therefore offer the fewest temptations to vanity.

POINT II

NOTHING MORE AGREEABLE IN THE SIGHT OF GOD THAN ZEAL FOR SOULS

CONSIDERATION.— This is self-evident, since the zeal in question has not only the glory of God for its end, but the salvation of souls, a single soul being of more value in His eyes than anything else in the world. If we call to mind all that our Lord did and suffered for the salvation of man, His labors, His tears, His humiliations, and His death, we shall require no other argument to convince us of the esteem which He attaches to zeal for souls.

APPLICATION.— This the Apostles understood, and were thus inspired to undertake such distant journeys and arduous labors, to brave perils of every kind, and finally death amidst frightful tortures. What proofs do you give of sharing their ardor? Do you neglect no occasion of exercising this zeal? How do you cultivate the vine committed to your care? Are not you of the number of those who form great designs for the future, neglecting the present?

AFFECTIONS.— An ardent desire to labor and suffer much for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

RESOLUTIONS.— To devote yourself unreservedly to the work of zeal to which you are specially called by obedience.

POINT III

NOTHING MORE MERITORIOUS IN THE SIGHT OF GOD
THAN ZEAL FOR SOULS

CONSIDERATION.— Since nothing is more agreeable to God, it follows that nothing is more meritorious, and consequently that nothing will be more magnificently rewarded. These are the words of the Holy Ghost, "They that instruct many to justice" shall shine "as stars to all eternity," (Daniel 12: 3;) or, as St. James has it, "He who causeth a sinner to be converted from the error of his ways shall save his soul from death and shall cover a multitude of sins." (St. James 5: 20.)

APPLICATION.— What encouraging reflections for the different members of a religious community, for those who spend their life in the labors of Martha, for those who are preparing for the ministry, or who, having engaged in it, are compelled to remain inactive through sickness or old age! For all, as members of one body, co-operate toward the same end; either in providing for the wants of their brethren, or by offering to God their studies, their sufferings, and their prayers for those laboring for the salvation of souls.

COLLOQUY with St. Francis Xavier. Conjure him to obtain for us one spark of the fire of pure, constant, and generous zeal through which he gained so many souls to God in India and Japan.

THE RICH YOUNG MAN

CALLED TO EVANGELICAL PERFECTION

1st Prel. Imagine the young man kneeling at the feet of our Lord.

2d Prel. Ask the grace of increasing in the perfection of your vocation.

POINT I

THE QUESTION THE YOUNG MAN ASKS OUR LORD

CONSIDERATION.— On one occasion, when our Lord was preaching in the country round about the Jordan, a certain young man appeared before Him, and addressed Him in these words: “Magister bone, quid boni faciam, ut habeam vitam æternam?” “Good Master, what good shall I do, that I may have life everlasting?” (St. Matt. 19: 16.)

APPLICATION.— This young man gives us an example of fervor, respect, humility, and zeal; but what we should principally remark is, that he does not ask our Lord what sins he should avoid in order to gain heaven, but what good he should do. Unfortunately we, for the most part, follow an opposite course; our faults and the means of overcoming them form the almost exclusive subject of our examinations and resolutions. In future let our first thought on rising be the good we may do that day, reviewing the actions which will occupy us, and seeing how we may most perfectly perform them, asking God’s blessing upon them, and taking the necessary resolutions.

Then at night, when we make our examination, let us thank God (filled with joy) for the good He has enabled us to do, resolved to do still better in time to come. Thus we shall serve God with love and con-

fidence, and shall infallibly make greater progress than in perpetually dwelling upon our sins and imperfections.

AFFECTIONS.— Pray for grace to walk steadily in this path.

RESOLUTIONS.— To recommend it to others. To strengthen and perfect myself.

POINT II

THE ANSWER OUR LORD GIVES THE YOUNG MAN

CONSIDERATION.— Our Lord answers the young man by saying, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." And the young man replies, "All these have I kept from my youth: what is yet wanting to me? Jesus saith to him, If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow Me." (St. Matt. 19: 17, 20, 21.)

APPLICATION.— What splendid inducements were here held out by our Lord to the young man whom, looking on, He loved, as St. Mark tells us! In place of perishable, He offered him eternal wealth; instead of limited earthly possessions, the boundless kingdom of heaven, and the enjoyment of glory and happiness therein proportioned to the greatness of his sacrifice. What blessedness for the young man, had he understood and followed the counsels of His Divine Lord!

AFFECTIONS.— Let us ever praise and bless the Lord, rejoicing that we have understood and followed this counsel.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will strive to be most faithful to the promises made to our Lord in the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, when received into the bosom of this order or congregation.

POINT III

SADNESS OF THE YOUNG MAN

CONSIDERATION.— But the young man, instead of being filled with joy and gladness at these words of our Lord, was, as the Gospel says, “struck sad at that saying,” and “went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.” (St. Mark 10: 22.)

APPLICATION.— Here we are tempted to inquire the end of this young man: was he saved or lost? St. Augustine thinks that he was not saved, not because he did not follow the counsel given, but because his want of resolution led him to fall an easy prey to the temptations of wealth, which he would have avoided in following his vocation. Our Lord's words on the departure of the young man give great weight to this opinion, “How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!” (St. Matt. 10: 23.)

Let us thank God for the grace which has overcome the obstacles to our holy vocation.

COLLOQUY with our divine Lord.

SICKNESS AND DEATH OF LAZARUS

1st Prel. Imagine our Lord having just received the message from the sisters of Lazarus.

2d Prel. Ask for great confidence in God, joined to perfect resignation.

POINT I

THE MESSAGE FROM THE SISTERS OF LAZARUS

CONSIDERATION.—The resurrection of Lazarus is doubtless one of the most striking of those miracles by which our Lord deigned to prove His divinity, being performed in the neighborhood of Jerusalem in favor of a wealthy and well-known personage, who had lain for four days in the grave, and in the presence of a number of distinguished citizens. Let us first consider the message sent to our Lord as soon as Martha and Mary were aware of the serious character of their brother's illness. It ran thus, "Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick." (St. John 11:3.)

APPLICATION.—From this we may learn — 1st. That in all our afflictions we should *promptly* have recourse to God, and not wait till we have exhausted all human means of aid. 2d. That we need not set forth many motives in our petitions for God's assistance. This is what St. Augustine says in speaking of the message of Martha and Mary, which he calls a model of prayer.

AFFECTIONS.—Do you also say to Jesus, "Lord, he whom Thou lovest," he to whom Thou dost never cease to manifest Thy love by numerous blessings, "is sick," more sick even in mind than in body. Behold me at Thy feet. I say no more; abandoning myself to the tenderness of Thy loving heart.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will often recite this prayer when visiting the Blessed Sacrament.

POINT II

THE REPLY OF JESUS

CONSIDERATION.— “ This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified by it.” (St. John 11:4.) Such was the sole answer of our gracious Lord to the message of Martha and Mary. Later on, He said to His disciples, “ Lazarus our friend sleepeth.” (St. John 11:11.) From these mysterious words those who heard them naturally gathered that our Lord thought the state of the sick man in no way alarming. But what could the sisters have thought as they watched beside their dying brother, after having implored our Lord’s aid with such confidence? It was, indeed, enough to overcome their faith and resignation; but they never murmured; even the very words Mary used when she first saw our Lord showed that her faith in Him was still unshaken: “ Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.” (St. John 11:21.)

APPLICATION.— Where are your faith and resignation when, after having prayed long and earnestly, you find what you have asked still denied? Do you not yield to thoughts injurious to God, or at least to impatience, to murmuring and discouragement, saying to yourself what others say aloud, “ What is the use of prayer?”

AFFECTIONS.— “ May the most just, admirable, and inscrutable will of God be done! May it be praised and glorified forever!” (Prayer indulged by Pius VII., 1818.)

RESOLUTIONS.— I will repeat this sublime aspiration

from my heart during those afflictions which I may have hoped to avert by prayer.

POINT III

THE DELAY IN OUR LORD'S DEPARTURE

CONSIDERATION.— St. John tells us that Jesus loved Martha and her sister Mary, and Lazarus. But in spite of this, and though He intended giving proof of His affection by working so great a miracle in their behalf, it was our Lord's will to try them in the furnace of affliction. Thus He permitted Lazarus to die, and seemed regardless of the grief of the sisters; remaining three days in the place where He was, and then taking two days in crossing the Jordan and reaching Bethany, which therefore He did not reach till four days after the death of Lazarus.

APPLICATION.— Thus our Lord deals with His chosen ones. If you meet with many and bitter trials, conclude therefrom that He loves you, and is preparing for you superabundant happiness and glory, and take courage from the thought.

COLLOQUY with one of the saints whose Octave we now celebrate, or with several in succession.

FIRST INCIDENT OF THE JOURNEY TO BETHANY:

THIRD PREDICTION OF THE PASSION

1st Prel. Imagine our Lord on His way thither, surrounded by His Apostles.

2d Prel. Ask that you may always bear in mind the remembrance of the Passion, and derive great fruit from doing so.

POINT I

OUR LORD PREDICTS HIS PASSION FOR THE THIRD TIME

CONSIDERATION.— On the journey to Bethany, our Lord spoke for the third time, and in a more detailed manner, of His Passion to be accomplished in the course of a few weeks, saying, “Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man shall be betrayed to the chief priests, and to the scribes and ancients; and they shall condemn Him to death, and shall deliver Him to the Gentiles: and they shall mock Him, and spit on Him, and scourge Him and kill Him: and the third day He shall rise again.” (St. Mark 10: 33, 34.)

APPLICATION.— Do not these frequent references of our Lord to His approaching Passion show that it was ever in His mind and dear to His heart? for, as He Himself said, “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” (St. Matt. 12: 34.) If, therefore, we desire to please His sacred heart and obtain signal favors from it, let us always try to remember what He suffered for us; let us speak of it to others, and make it the subject of our visit to the Blessed Sacrament.

AFFECTIONS.— Acts of faith, admiration, love, gratitude, and desire to suffer much for Jesus, who has endured so much for us.

RESOLUTIONS.—In my confessions and communions, I will reflect on the Passion of my Beloved Saviour, in order to excite myself to perfect contrition and devotion.

POINT II

OUR LORD'S PREDICTION NOT UNDERSTOOD BY THE APOSTLES

CONSIDERATION.—Though our Lord spoke of His approaching passion and death with the utmost plainness, the Apostles "*Nihil horum intellexerunt*," "understood none of these things." (St. Luke 18: 34.) They even went so far as to discredit the predictions of their Master, St. Peter exclaiming, in the words related by St. Matthew, "*Absit a te, Domine: non erit tibi hoc*." "Lord, be it far from Thee: this shall not be unto Thee," (St. Matt. 16: 22;) so blinded were they still by their prejudices respecting the temporal glory of the promised Messiah.

APPLICATION.—Let us learn to be more indulgent, or at least to show more moderation toward those who differ from us, and not to accuse them too readily of incredulity or impiety, either on account of their errors in matters of faith or their aversion to certain religious institutions and practices. How many amongst them are, like the Apostles, the victims of ignorance or of prejudice! Are we ourselves wholly free from prejudice? Do not we sometimes say, "I could not do without this, I could never do that, live in that place," etc.? All such ideas are the fruit of prejudice; that is, of an opinion formed before experience; which subsequent events, to our great surprise, often wholly remove.

AFFECTIONS.—Let us beg of God to render us prudent and charitable in judging our neighbor, and to

preserve us from yielding to prejudices which may interfere with our spiritual progress.

RESOLUTIONS.— To guard against the idea that certain efforts are beyond your strength. Consider that you can often accomplish more than at first seems possible.

POINT III

REASONS OF OUR LORD'S PREDICTION

CONSIDERATION.— Our Lord, though He well knew His Apostles would not understand Him when He spoke of His passion, did so for three reasons: 1st. That they might not be scandalized when they saw Him, their Master, treated exactly according to His predictions, and learn that His sufferings were caused much more by His love than by the malice of His enemies. 2d. To awake in their hearts toward Him the feelings of love and generosity so richly His due. 3d. To make them see that the kingdoms and thrones He had promised them could only be purchased by suffering and humiliation.

COLLOQUY with our Lord dying for us on the cross.

SECOND INCIDENT OF THE JOURNEY TO BETHANY

THE INCONSIDERATE REQUEST OF THE SONS OF ZEBEDEE

- 1st Prel.* Imagine the Apostles James and John, accompanied by their mother, making their request to our Lord.
2d Prel. Ask for humility as the fruit of the Meditation.

POINT I

THE INCONSIDERATE REQUEST OF THE TWO APOSTLES

CONSIDERATION.—“Then”—that is to say, directly after our Lord’s prediction of His Passion—“came to Him the mother of the sons of Zebedee, with her sons, adoring, and asking something of Him,” (St. Matt. 20:20;) “and they said, Grant to us that we may sit one on Thy right hand, and the other on Thy left, in Thy glory.” (St. Mark 10:37.) Such a demand, made at such a time, fully confirms what has just been said concerning the ignorance and prejudices of the Apostles.

APPLICATION.—But still more astounding than their ignorance is the astonishing lengths to which their ambition carries them. Not content with our Lord’s promise that they should one day sit on twelve seats judging the twelve tribes of Israel, they aspired to sit, the one on His right hand, the other on His left. What could lead two poor sinners to form such lofty pretensions? Alas! we may find the cause within ourselves. Ambition springs from pride, and pride is deeply rooted in every human heart, whatever its state or condition, and is the source of all the dissensions, disputes, and apostasies which have invaded even the sanctuary of religion. Be on your guard, therefore, and fear falling victims to its insidious advances.

AFFECTIONS.— Pray that you may be preserved from the snares and deceits of pride.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will examine my conscience, and ask myself if, in conversation, I am not ambitious of excelling others in wit and knowledge, or if I do not feel disappointed at seeing others more esteemed and sought after than I am.

POINT II

OUR LORD'S REPLY TO THE APOSTLES

CONSIDERATION.— Our Lord's reply to this ill-timed demand was sufficiently humiliating: "Nescitis quid petatis." "You know not what you ask. Can you drink the chalice that I shall drink?" — referring to the sufferings and humiliations of which He was so soon to drain the very dregs. He continues, "My chalice, indeed, you shall drink; but to sit on My right or left hand is not Mine to give to you, but to them for whom it is prepared by my Father." (St. Matt. 20: 22, 23.)

APPLICATION.— The practical conclusion we should derive from these words of our Lord appears to be this: that all our requests should be made under the condition of their being for our good; for often we, too, know not what we ask; even things which seem to us to tend to the glory of God and the welfare of our own or our neighbors' souls would, on the contrary, prove injurious to us.

AFFECTIONS.— Pray for grace to desire only what is pleasing to God.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will add to every prayer the following words, not only from my lips, but from my heart: "Provided, O Lord! that it be Thy will, and for my good."

POINT III

THE INDIGNATION OF THE OTHER APOSTLES: THE
ADMIRABLE LESSON GIVEN BY OUR LORD

CONSIDERATION.—“And the ten, hearing it,” St Matthew continues, “were moved with indignation against the two brethren. But Jesus called them to Him, and said, You know that the princes of the Gentiles lord it over them, and they that are the greater exercise power upon them. It shall not be so among you; but whoever will be the greater among you let him be your minister, and he that will be first among you shall be your servant. Even as the Son of Man is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a redemption for many.” (St. Matt. 20: 24–28.)

APPLICATION.—Let us endeavor to apply these words of our Lord to ourselves, so as to derive great practical fruit from them, examining ourselves as to our past conduct, and resolving for the future to make it more conformable to religious perfection.

COLLOQUY with your guardian angel, who, in all his acts, seeks only the glory of God, without reference to himself.

THIRD INCIDENT OF THE JOURNEY TO BETHANY

1st Prel. Imagine our Lord approaching Jericho, surrounded by the multitude.

2d Prel. Ask for grace to pray well.

POINT I

THE BLIND MAN CRYING ALOUD AS OUR LORD PASSES BY

CONSIDERATION.— “ Now it came to pass, when He drew nigh to Jericho, that a certain blind man sat by the wayside begging; and when he heard the multitude passing by, he asked what this meant, and they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by: and he cried out, saying, Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me! And they that went before rebuked him that he should hold his peace; but he cried out much more, Son of David, have mercy on me!” (St. Luke 18: 35-39.)

APPLICATION.— Let us consider the qualities of the prayer of this blind man. *1st.* It was well timed: he learned that our Lord was passing; moved by grace, he seized the opportunity, he cried out at once, and he was heard and healed by a miracle. Had he at all delayed, would he ever have received his sight? *2d.* It was fervent: uttered from the depths of a heart conscious of its misery. Why are our prayers so cold? Because we do not feel our misery. *3d.* It was pressing and persevering: he cried out, and ceased not to cry, though our Lord did not appear to heed him, and those by his side rebuked him. Is it not our want of perseverance that renders our prayers so often of no effect?

AFFECTIONS.— “ Domine, doce nos orare.” “ Lord,

teach us to pray," and, like this happy mendicant, to seize the opportunities afforded us by Thy grace.

RESOLUTIONS.— To correct yourself of the faults of inconstancy and distrust at prayer. Beg for grace to do so thoroughly.

POINT II

OUR LORD COMMANDS THE BLIND MAN TO BE BROUGHT TO HIM

CONSIDERATION.— Though our Lord seemed at first not to heed the cries of the blind man, wishing to test his faith and confidence, His heart was full of compassion for his state. "*Stans autem Jesus jussit illum adduci ad se, et cum appropinquasset, interrogavit illum, dicens, Quid tibi vis faciam? At ille dixit, Domine, ut videam.*" "He commanded him," as the Gospel says, "to be brought unto Him; and when he was come near, He asked him, saying, What wilt thou that I do to thee? But he said, Lord, that I may see." (St. Luke 18: 40, 41.)

APPLICATION.— If God does not immediately grant our petitions, it is for our good. He requires us to express them, not because they are unknown to Him, but for our own advantage; in so doing, we recognize that all benefits flow from Him alone, and show our filial confidence in our Heavenly Father.

AFFECTIONS.— My God and my Father! teach me to love Thee and confide in Thee.

RESOLUTIONS.— In all necessities of soul and body, I will have recourse to God with the simplicity and confidence of a child.

POINT III

OUR LORD HEALS THE BLIND MAN

CONSIDERATION.—How wonderfully were the faith and perseverance of the blind man rewarded! “And Jesus said to him, Receive thy sight; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he saw, and followed Him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.” (St. Luke 18: 42, 43.)

APPLICATION.—Remark our Lord’s goodness on this occasion. Not only does He give sight to the bodily eyes of the blind man, but He opens the eyes of his soul. In his Benefactor the blind man recognizes the promised Messiah; he follows Him, he blesses Him, and the surrounding multitude are infected by his enthusiasm.

Let us, after his example, praise, adore, and glorify our Divine Lord, from whom we have received even greater favors than the blind man of Jericho. Let us try to know and love Him more and more, and to make others know and love Him also.

COLLOQUY with the great Saint Martin of Tours, the perfect imitator of Christ, mighty in word and work, who converted so many idolaters and hardened sinners. Let us beg of him, on this his feast, to obtain for us grace to walk, after his example, generously and perseveringly in the footsteps of our Divine Model, and to assist in gaining souls to God by good example, prayer, and fervent zeal.

FOURTH INCIDENT OF THE JOURNEY TO BETHANY
 THE WONDERFUL CONVERSION OF
 ZACHEUS

1st Prel. Imagine our Lord in the house of Zacheus.

2d Prel. Ask our Lord to sanctify you as He sanctified Zacheus.

POINT I

ZACHEUS SEEKS TO SEE OUR LORD

CONSIDERATION.— The miraculous cure of the blind man being noised abroad throughout the then flourishing and important city of Jericho, our Lord was triumphantly received on His entrance in this very place where, fifteen ages before, Joshua had been victorious, but where He came not to execute justice but mercy, and to call sinners to repentance. Amongst these sinners was “a man named Zacheus, who was the chief of the publicans, and he was rich. And he sought to see Jesus, who He was: and he could not for the crowd, because he was low of stature; and running before, he climbed up into a sycamore tree, that he might see Him, for He was to pass that way.” (St. Luke 19: 2-4.)

APPLICATION.— The desire of Zacheus to behold the Author of so great a miracle was, doubtless, very natural; but it was not so much founded upon curiosity as upon grace, according to the opinion of commentators. It was his eagerness and generosity that obtained him such signal favors. Oh! if our dispositions resembled his, what graces and favors would be ours likewise!

AFFECTIONS.— Acknowledge, regret, and repent of your sins.

RESOLUTIONS.— To be henceforth more docile and attentive to the inspirations of grace.

POINT II

ZACHEUS HONORED BY A VISIT FROM OUR LORD

CONSIDERATION.— The Evangelist continues, “When Jesus was come to the place, looking up, He saw him, and said to him, Zacheus, make haste and come down; for this day I must abide in thy house.” (St. Luke 19: 5.) What must have been the surprise and delight of Zacheus at these gracious words? No wonder that “*et festinans descendit et excepit illum gaudens.*” “He made haste and came down, and received Him with joy.” (St. Luke 19: 6.)

APPLICATION.— When our Lord deigns to visit you in Holy Communion, let no ill-timed fears prevent your opening your heart to Him with joy and confidence, but welcome Him after the example of Zacheus.

AFFECTIONS.— Ask pardon for the faults you have committed in your communions, particularly for want of confidence in God.

RESOLUTIONS.— On days of Holy Communion, I will imagine, on awaking, that our Lord says to me, “*Festinans descende; quia hodie in domo tuo oportet me manere.*” “Make haste and come down; for this day I must abide in thy heart.” Thus will my heart be expanded and filled with those sentiments of joy and confidence which our Lord loves to find therein.

POINT III

ZACHEUS CONVERTED AND SANCTIFIED BY OUR
LORD'S VISIT

CONSIDERATION.—As our Lord entered into the house of Zacheus, grace entered with Him, and made this man, regarded as a sinner, a just man and a saint.* His works gave proof of the change. "Behold, Lord," he said, "the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have wronged any man of anything, I restore him fourfold. Jesus said to him, This day is salvation come to this house; . . . for the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." (St. Luke 19: 8-10.)

APPLICATION.—Let us imitate Zacheus in his generosity by putting our good resolutions into practice immediately, and making what amends we can for any injury or scandal we may have caused; thus shall we secure our Lord's favor, and be sure of one day hearing from His lips words of blessing and salvation.

COLLOQUY with our Beloved Saviour. Thank Him for having so often honored our hearts with His presence by giving himself to us in Holy Communion; beg that, through His grace, we may love Him as He deserves, or that we may at least not be deficient in gratitude for the proofs of love which He lavishes upon us.

* St. Clement relates that Zacheus afterward became a follower of St. Peter, and was ordained by him Bishop of Cesarea.

THE RESURRECTION OF LAZARUS

OUR LORD ARRIVES AT BETHANY

1st Prel. Imagine Lazarus coming forth from the tomb.

2d Prel. Ask for lively faith in the great mystery of the Resurrection.

POINT I

OUR LORD'S INTERVIEW WITH MARTHA AND MARY

CONSIDERATION.—“Jesus therefore came,” relates St. John, “and found that he” (Lazarus) “had been four days already in the grave. . . . Martha therefore, as soon as she heard that Jesus was come, went to meet Him: but Mary sat at home. Martha therefore said to Jesus, Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. Jesus saith to her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha said to Him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus saith to her, I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in Me, although he be dead, shall live: and every one that liveth and believeth in Me shall not die forever. Believest thou this? She saith to Him, Yea, Lord, I have believed that Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God, who art come into this world.” (St. John 11: 17, 20, 21, 23–27.)

APPLICATION.—Imagine our Lord asking you the same question, “Believest thou this?” and strengthen your faith in the great and consoling mystery of the resurrection. If you penetrate it deeply, you will in future be capable of greater sacrifices; you will not so much fear injuring your health.

AFFECTIONS.—Acts of faith, hope, and supplication.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will sustain myself in fatigue and suffering by reflecting that, on the great day of the

resurrection, my glory and capacity for enjoyment will be great in proportion to the pains and privations I have endured in the service of God and my neighbor.

POINT II

OUR LORD AT THE GRAVE OF LAZARUS

CONSIDERATION.— When Mary heard from her sister that our Lord was come, she rose up, and, followed by the Jews that were with her in the house, went to meet Him; and, as the Gospel continues, when she “was come where Jesus was, seeing him, she fell down at His feet, and saith to Him, Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. Jesus therefore, when He saw her weeping, and the Jews that were come with her weeping, groaned in the spirit, and troubled Himself, and said, Where have you laid him? They say to Him, Lord, come and see. And Jesus wept. The Jews therefore said, Behold how He loved him! But some of them said, Could not He that opened the eyes of the man born blind have caused that this man should not die? Jesus therefore, again groaning in Himself, cometh to the sepulcher. Now it was a cave, and a stone was laid over it.” (St. John 11: 32–38.)

APPLICATION.— Let us observe: 1st. That Mary, as soon as she heard that Jesus was come, left all those that were trying to console her, to throw herself at the feet of Jesus: let us, too, learn from her to find our best consolation at His feet before the Blessed Sacrament. 2d. That we are not forbidden to be moved by the sorrow of our friends and relations, since our Lord Himself wept at beholding the sorrow of Martha and Mary. 3d. That, not satisfied with bestowing His compassion on their sorrow, our Lord removed its cause by restoring to them the object of their love.

Let us do as He did, as far as lies in our power, true it is, we can not restore life to the dying, nor riches to those who have lost them; but we may bring back those to the fold who were dead in sins, and restore them to the riches of God's grace.

AFFECTIONS.— Let us beg of our Lord to aid us in relieving the misfortunes of these sinners, who are the more to be pitied as they are unconscious of their misery.

RESOLUTIONS.— To guard against becoming insensible to our own spiritual destitution.

POINT III

RESURRECTION OF LAZARUS

CONSIDERATION.—"Jesus saith, Take away the stone. . . . They took therefore the stone away: and Jesus, lifting His eyes, said, Father, I give Thee thanks that Thou hast heard Me. And I knew that Thou hearest me always: but because of the people who stand about have I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me. When He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And presently he that had been dead came forth." (St. John 11: 39, 41-44.)

APPLICATION.— Let us admire the power and goodness of our Divine Lord, who worked this stupendous miracle not so much for Lazarus as for the Jews and for ourselves, that we might believe in Him, love Him, and serve Him with all the powers of our soul.

THE CHIEF PRIESTS AND THE RULERS

CONSPIRE AGAINST CHRIST

1st Prel. Imagine the council-room with the chief priests and rulers assembled.

2d Prel. Ask an increase of love toward our Lord.

POINT I

THE JEALOUSY OUR LORD'S ENEMIES CONCEIVED
AGAINST HIM

CONSIDERATION.—We learn from St. John that “many therefore of the Jews who were come to Mary and Martha, and had seen the things that Jesus did, believed;” but he goes on to say, “Some of them went to the Pharisees, and told them the things that Jesus had done. The chief priests therefore and the Pharisees gathered a council, and said, What do we? for this Man doth many miracles. If we let Him alone so, all will believe in Him.” (St. John 11:45-48.)

APPLICATION.—Here are clear proofs of the jealousy and hatred the chief priests and Pharisees bore our Lord, both because He made the people believe in Him, and because He rebuked their own pride and hypocrisy. It was passion that blinded them, and that at last led them to put to death Him who had come to save them. In the same manner how many priests, and even religious, distinguished by their learning and talents, have been similarly deceived. Let their example make us fear for ourselves.

AFFECTIONS.—Beg of God to show you which of your passions is the most dangerous; and to give you strength to resist and conquer it.

RESOLUTIONS.—To resist vigorously the first impulses of passion.

POINT II

PRETEXTS FOR THE HOSTILITY THE CHIEF PRIESTS AND
PHARISEES BORE OUR LORD

CONSIDERATION.—Passion is ever ashamed to declare itself openly, and seeks to veil itself under specious pretexts. Thus the chief priests and the Pharisees reasoned, saying, "If we let Him alone so, all will believe in Him; and the Romans will come, and take away our place and nation." (St. John 11:48.)

APPLICATION.—Do not we often see in these our days, men as distinguished amongst their fellows as these Scribes and Pharisees, who league themselves together against our Lord and His Church? They would not for the world acknowledge that their passions make them persecutors of all that is holy; they pretend that they are influenced only by the good of humanity, and unfortunately succeed in inducing many to join them.

AFFECTIONS.—Thank God that we have been preserved from such snares. Beg of Him to bless our efforts in the work of education, if it be intrusted to us.

RESOLUTIONS.—To excite myself to fervor and generosity in the service of God by reflecting on the many proofs I have received of His special care of me.

POINT III

THE ENEMIES OF OUR LORD OPENLY DECLARE THEIR
RESOLVE TO PUT HIM TO DEATH

CONSIDERATION.—At length the hostility of the priests and Pharisees bursts forth undisguised. "One of them named Caiphas, being the high priest that year, said to them, You know nothing, neither do you con-

sider that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. And this he spoke not of himself, but being the high-priest of that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation, and not only for the nation, but to gather together in one the children of God that were dispersed. From that day therefore they devised to put Him to death. Wherefore Jesus walked no more openly among the Jews; but He went into a country near the desert, unto a city that is called Ephrem." (St. John 11: 49-54.)

APPLICATION.—The prophetic words of Caiphas show us that in the supernatural order the power of the priest is derived from his office, and not from his personal character. This is our security in the reception of the sacraments. The flight of our Lord teaches us, besides, that to hide from persecution is not cowardice, and that a contrary conduct would oftentimes be rashness.

COLLOQUY with Jesus Christ, Our Master and Our Model.

OUR LORD'S ABIDING AT EPHREM:

ON OUR ANNUAL RETREAT

1st Prel. Imagine our Lord and His Apostles retiring into the desert.

2d Prel. Ask the grace of a due appreciation of an annual retreat, and that you may benefit by it.

POINT I

IMPORTANCE OF THE RETREAT

CONSIDERATION.— Jesus, we are told, “went into a country near the desert, unto a city that is called Ephrem, and there He abode with His disciples.” (St. John 11: 54.) We find that He remained there six days. This retirement of our Lord's, a fortnight before His Passion, forcibly reminds us of the annual retreat prescribed us by our rule. That we may profit as we ought by so great a means of grace, let us bear in mind the ends proposed: 1st. To sound the depths of our hearts, to learn to know ourselves, and to see how we stand as regards our vocation and the observance of our vows. 2d. To repair what is past by a good confession or a review of the year, accompanied with a perfect contrition. 3d. To lay down a rule of life for the future, and to renew our fervor, diminished as it is by the advance of time. It is true that our spiritual exercises ought to sustain and increase our fervor in the service of God; but these valuable instruments of perfection are apt to lose their efficacy by use, and the chief end of the retreat is to impart a fresh vigor to our daily practices of piety, and to lead us to fulfill them better for the future.

APPLICATION.— These considerations will serve to show the importance of this retreat and the danger in-

curred by those who make it carelessly. Has your conscience nothing to reproach you with on this subject?

AFFECTIONS.— Ask pardon for your past faults. Excite in yourself an ardent desire to be able to say at the hour of death, “I have much wherewith to reproach myself, but at least I have always made the annual retreat most carefully.”

RESOLUTIONS.— When the time of retreat has passed away, I will endeavor still to keep up its impressions, in order that I may not lose the fruit I should derive from it.

POINT II

MEANS OF MAKING THE RETREAT WELL

CONSIDERATION.— To do so: 1st. Think how reasonable it is that you who have labored for the salvation of others during a whole year should at least take a week to busy yourself exclusively about your own soul. 2d. Remember that God has from all eternity attached special graces to this retreat: your perseverance, your eternal salvation, may depend upon it; perhaps even it may be His design that it should serve as your preparation for death. 3d. Excite within yourself an earnest desire of making it well, with a lively confidence that God will enable you to gather abundant fruit from it. 4th. Pray much: the more wretched you feel yourself, the greater should be your confidence, joining mortification to prayer, and having a special devotion to our Blessed Lady.

APPLICATION.— Think what a rigorous account God will ask you of this retreat. Think how many lost souls, had they received such a grace, it would have made saints. Think of your own salvation; think of the salvation of your neighbors; for theirs may depend upon the use you make of this retreat.

AFFECTIONS.— Ardent desires, humble supplications.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will always make the annual retreat as if it were to be the last of my life.

POINT III

MEANS OF PRESERVING THE FRUITS OF THE RETREAT

CONSIDERATION.— 1st. To write down clearly, before coming out of retreat, what change you should make in any part of your conduct as regards men, as regards God, and what habits you should adopt for the future as regards God, as regards men. 2d. To make these points successively the matter of your particular examination. 3d. To make them the matter of your meditation every Sunday or Monday. 4th. To examine yourself more thoroughly upon them on the day of your monthly retreat, and to give an account of them to your director. Have you employed these means constantly since your last retreat?

APPLICATION.— See in what respects you have failed. Take a resolution not to do so for the future, but to be faithful to them till your next retreat.

COLLOQUY with our Lord in the retreat of Ephrem.

ON THE DUTY OF PRAYING ALWAYS

1st Prel. Imagine our Lord saying to you, "Pray always."

2d Prel. Ask for the grace of doing so.

POINT I

HOW WE CAN PRAY ALWAYS

CONSIDERATION.— A time of danger and temptation was now at hand for the Apostles; more than ever they required to strengthen themselves by prayer. Therefore their Divine Master told them to pray *always*, because in all situations of life, grace is needed, either to enable men to struggle successfully against temptation, or to enable them to fulfill their obligations as Christians or religious. "Petite et dabitur vobis." "Ask, and it shall be given you," (St. Matt. 7:7,) is the condition imposed by our Lord Himself; hence the maxim, "All by prayer; nothing without prayer."

APPLICATION.— But in practice, how are we to pray always? It can be done in various ways; one is by familiarizing ourselves with some ejaculatory prayer, which by frequent use springs from the heart to the lips without the slightest effort. The venerable Louis de Ponte was so accustomed to repeat, "Propter te," "For Thy sake, my God," that his communications with heaven may be said to have been almost uninterrupted; he, indeed, prayed always. How happy should we be if we were thus ever united to God by prayer! and what strength it would give us in time of temptation! But it is in our power to obtain it, as others have done, but only by constant and generous effort.

AFFECTIONS.— A steadfast determination to leave no means untried to attain this end, which would conduce so materially to your advantage.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will never rest until I have succeeded, whatever it may cost me.

POINT II

AGAINST DISCOURAGEMENT IN PRAYER

CONSIDERATION.—The gospel continues, “*Oportet semper orare et non deficere.*” “We ought always to pray, and not to faint.” (St. Luke 18: 1.) The same lesson is contained in the parable which follows — that of the unjust judge, who is for a long time appealed to in vain by a poor oppressed widow. But at length the judge is compelled to do her justice; “because,” as he says, “she is troublesome to me, I will avenge her.” (St. Luke 18: 5.)

APPLICATION.—It was very necessary that our Lord, after having exhorted us to pray always, should urge upon us to continue in prayer, and not to give way, as we are often inclined to do, to discouragement and weariness. How many persons who at first prayed with fervor and confidence, finding their petitions unanswered, have lost heart and abandoned prayer! Had the widow of the parable thus acted, she would have obtained nothing. We are often discouraged, besides, by the remembrance of our unworthiness, our faults and our falls. We should console ourselves by reflecting that nothing is more pleasing to God than the prayer of a humble and contrite heart; that the greater our miseries, the more abundant His mercies; that the promise of our Lord, “Ask, and it shall be given you,” proves that it is our prayer and not our merits that draws down on us the favor of Heaven; and that oft-times, if we do not receive what we have asked, we obtain other and more precious graces.

COLLOQUY with our Lord, who has given us not only the precept but the example of prayer; after having labored all day, He frequently passed the night in prayer. "*Erat pernoctans in oratione Dei.*" (St. Luke 6: 12.) Let us ask of Him the spirit of prayer, without which we can not accomplish anything great either for God, for ourselves, or for our neighbor.

THE SUPPER AT BETHANY

1st Prel. Imagine St. Mary Magdalene anointing our Lord's feet.

2d Prel. Ask for grace to love our Lord as she did.

POINT I

THE CONDUCT OF ST. MARY MAGDALENE

CONSIDERATION.— Mary had anointed the feet of our Lord on a previous occasion, and also in the house of Simon of Bethany, probably the same St. Mark speaks of as Simon the leper. At this second supper, eight days before the Passion, Lazarus being present, “ Mary therefore took a pound of ointment of right spikenard, of great price, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment.” (St. John 12: 3.) This holy woman took every opportunity of showing the love and gratitude she bore our Lord. She had formerly taken pleasure in adorning her hair, and in rich perfume; now she makes a sacrifice of both in His service.

APPLICATION.— Let us also, following the example of this great penitent, lose no opportunity of showing love and generosity toward our Lord. Let us offer to Him in particular what it costs us most to relinquish, our judgment and our liberty, yielding them up willingly under the yoke of obedience. Let us be, as St. Paul expresses it, “ Christi bonus odor,” “ the good odor of Christ,” diffusing it around us by giving an example of perfect regularity, anointing the feet of our Lord by cherishing in a peculiar manner the poor suffering members of His mystical body.

AFFECTIONS.— Ask pardon for your want of generosity.

RESOLUTIONS.— Manifest generosity particularly by sacrificing those things of which you have hitherto made a bad use.

POINT II

CONDUCT OF JUDAS

CONSIDERATION.— Judas, far from being edified at the holy prodigality of St. Mary Magdalene, vented his vexation in complaints hidden under the mask of charity. “Why,” said he, “was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? Now he said this, not because he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and, having the purse, carried the things that were put therein.” (St. John 12: 5, 6.)

APPLICATION.— We are justly indignant at the behavior of Judas, who, though one of the twelve, had become a thief, a hypocrite, and the censor of his Divine Master; whilst we admire the unruffled sweetness of our Lord, who, though He knew the hearts of all men, and that of Judas in particular, abstained from a word of reproach, as if, by sparing his reputation before men, He still hoped to win the traitor back. He merely blamed him indirectly whilst praising Mary Magdalene. “Let her alone,” He said; “she hath wrought a good work upon Me. Amen I say to you, Whosoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, that also which she hath done shall be told for a memorial of her.” (St. Mark 14: 6, 9.)

AFFECTIONS.— Congratulate Magdalene. Beg of her to obtain for us a share in her love and generosity toward Christ.

RESOLUTIONS.— Carefully avoid discouraging those over whom we have authority, by public blame or reproach.

POINT III.

CONDUCT OF THE INHABITANTS IN JERUSALEM

CONSIDERATION.— These may be comprised in four classes: 1st. Those who, having been converted by the resurrection of Lazarus, had recognized Jesus as the Messiah, and flocked to Bethany to pay Him homage. 2d. Those who had been drawn thither by curiosity. 3d. The largest number, the wholly indifferent, who remained at home, disdaining to make inquiry concerning the reported miracle. 4th. The bitter enemies of our Lord, the chief priests, who “thought to kill Lazarus also, because many of the Jews by reason of him went away and believed in Jesus.” (St. John 12: 10, 11.)

APPLICATION.— We may learn from this that the triumphs of the Church are ever followed by the same effects — the conversion of the well-disposed and the consolation of the faithful; an increase of hatred in the declared enemies of Christ, and the indifference of the greatest number, who are entirely absorbed in pleasure and in mere material interests. Let us derive as fruit from it an increase of zeal for the glory of our Lord and for the conversion of sinners.

COLLOQUY.— Join with the pious inhabitants of Jerusalem in rejoicing at the glory of Jesus. Ask the pardon and conversion of those who, through passion, have become hostile or indifferent to Him.

OUR LORD'S ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM

1st Prel. Imagine our Lord seated on the foal of an ass, approaching the town in triumph, surrounded by an admiring crowd.

2d Prel. Ask that the love of Jesus may triumph over your heart, and over the hearts of all mankind.

POINT I

PREPARATIONS FOR OUR LORD'S ENTRY

CONSIDERATION.— And on the next day after the feast at the house of Simon, “He went before, going up to Jerusalem. . . . And when He was come nigh to Bethphage and Bethania, unto the mount called Olivet, He sent two of His disciples, saying, Go into the town which is over against you; at your entering into which you shall find the colt of an ass tied, on which no man ever hath sitten: * loose him, and bring him hither. And if any man shall ask you, Why do you loose him? you shall say thus unto him, Because the Lord hath need of his service.” (St. Luke 19:28-31.) Here we know not what to admire most — the foreknowledge of our Lord, which nothing escapes, and the free domain He possesses over the goods of His creatures; the prompt obedience of His disciples in executing an order which must have seemed to them rash and dangerous; or the eagerness with which the inhabitants of Bethany complied with the request of the messengers of Jesus.

APPLICATION.— Let us learn: 1st. To abandon our-

* It appears, from the text, that Jesus rode successively the ass and the colt. The Holy Fathers see in this a mystical meaning. The ass represents the Jewish people, already accustomed to bear the yoke of the law; while the untamed colt is supposed to be a figure of the Gentile nations.

selves to the providence of God, who watches over each one of us, knowing all that happens to us, and turning it in His love to our profit. 2d. To offer Him unreservedly health, talents, learning, etc. 3d. Not to hesitate when obedience imposes on us duties apparently difficult. If we act in a spirit of faith like the disciples, all difficulties will speedily disappear.

AFFECTIONS.—Offer to God your determination to adhere to these wise rules, and ask grace to be faithful to this resolution.

RESOLUTIONS.—To endeavor to obey in the spirit of faith. Thus only will you succeed in conquering natural repugnance.

POINT II

GLORIES OF OUR LORD'S TRIUMPH

CONSIDERATION.—What sweetness and majesty united in our Lord, what enthusiasm in the people on the occasion of His entry! “They took,” as says the gospel, “branches of palm-trees, and went forth to meet Him,” (St. John 12: 13,) “and spread their garments in the way, . . . and cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord; hosanna in the highest!” (St. Matt. 21: 8, 9.)

APPLICATION.—If you should happen to be praised for your zeal or charity, to become the object of reverence, perhaps even to be regarded as a saint, repress all emotion of vanity, refer all your success to God alone, and remember that only five days after the triumphal entry of our Lord into Jerusalem, the very same streets re-echoed with the cry of “Crucifige, crucifige eum.” “Crucify Him, crucify Him!” (St. Luke 23: 21.)

AFFECTIONS.—Teach me, O Lord! to lose sight of myself, and to seek in all things only Thy glory, the triumph of the Church, and my own sanctification.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will frequently renew my good intention, in order that I may avoid the snares of vanity.

POINT III

THE ENVY OF THE PHARISEES

CONSIDERATION.— Though the Scribes and Pharisees could not but see the accomplishment of the prophecy of Zachary in the triumphal entry of our Lord, pride and jealousy prevented their admitting it. They said among themselves, "Do you see that we prevail nothing? Behold, the whole world is gone after Him." (St. John 12:19.) Some even went so far as to say to our Lord, "Master, rebuke Thy disciples;" to whom He said, "I say to you, If these shall hold their peace, the stones will cry out." (St. Luke 19:39, 40.) How wonderfully were these words of our Lord fulfilled on the day of His Passion! for when the terrified disciples stood silent on Calvary, the rending of the rocks bore testimony to the divinity of their Master.

APPLICATION.— If you feel vexed at the success of any of your colleagues, do not give way to the jealousy of the Pharisees. Thank God that good is done, whoever may be the instrument.

COLLOQUY with Christ triumphant on this day.

CONTINUATION OF THE SAME SUBJECT

JESUS WEEPS OVER JERUSALEM

1st Prel. Behold our Lord weeping over Jerusalem.

2d Prel. Ask that you may never cause Him such grief as He experienced at the sight of that faithless city.

POINT I

THE INFIDELITY OF JERUSALEM: THE FIRST MOTIVE
OF OUR LORD'S TEARS

CONSIDERATION.— The acclamations of the crowd increased as the procession approached the town; but our Lord, in the words of St. Luke, seeing the city, wept over it — not at the thought of the cruel death awaiting Him there, [that He had long desired and expected: a year before He had said, “*Baptismo autem habeo baptizari: et quomodo coarctor, usquedum perficiatur.*” “I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptized: and how am I straitened until it be accomplished,” (St. Luke 12: 50;)] but at the thought of the blindness of the inhabitants of that devoted city, who would for the most part persist in rejecting Him, and who were to be so fearfully chastised in consequence. It was the thought of their eternal reprobation that drew from His lips those touching words, “If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace; but now they are hidden from thy eyes.” (St. Luke 20: 42.)

APPLICATION.— Let us learn, from these tears of our Divine Lord, 1st. To be less taken up with our own petty miseries, and more concerned at the sight of so many blind and hardened sinners, and to use prayers, tears, penances, and mortifications for their

conversion. 2d. To keep alive within ourselves a spirit of compunction, which, alas! perhaps, we only know by name. 3d. To fear above all things, as the saints did, not to co-operate sufficiently with the grace of God.

AFFECTIONS.— Ask pardon for the many times you have grieved the Heart of Jesus by your sins and tepidity.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will henceforth avoid carefully all that could grieve the Heart of my beloved Saviour; and I will strive to please Him by fervor and zeal in gaining hearts to Him.

POINT II

THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM: THE SECOND MOTIVE OF OUR LORD'S TEARS

CONSIDERATION.— Our Lord loved Jerusalem tenderly. His Heavenly Father had made it the home of His chosen people, and the abiding-place of His Temple, and called it the Holy City, the City of God. How the thoughts of its total destruction must have grieved His sacred Heart when He uttered the fearful prophecy, "For the days shall come upon thee, and thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and straiten thee on every side, and beat thee flat to the ground, and thy children who are in thee; and they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone, because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation!" (St. Luke 20: 43, 44.) Our Lord still hoped by this terrible warning to convert the unbelieving Jews; and the prophecy was not fulfilled for thirty-eight years, when the Romans, the instruments of God's vengeance, laid siege to Jerusalem, and, after reducing it by famine, laid it waste exactly as our Lord had described.

APPLICATION.— The destruction of Jerusalem is a figure of the desolation caused by mortal sin in the faithless soul, which loses all its beauty in the sight of God, and becomes a hideous ruin, deprived of all the rights bestowed in holy baptism, of sanctifying grace, peace, and happiness, of all acquired merits, and, finally, the reward of heaven. O mercy of God! if this desolation be not ours. Let this thought increase our zeal and fervor.

COLLOQUY with our Divine and merciful Saviour, Thank Him for the patience and mercy which He manifests toward us. Participate in His grief and tears, caused by the blind obstinacy of sinners, and the reflection that His blood would be shed for them in vain, as He said in the Garden of Olives, "*Quæ utilitas in sanguine meo!*" Offer yourself as a victim of expiation.

PRINCIPAL EVENTS OF PALM-SUNDAY

1st Prel. Behold our Lord teaching in the Temple.

2d Prel. Ask for grace to follow His example.

POINT I

OUR LORD SOUGHT BY THE GENTILES

CONSIDERATION.— The great event of this day is the triumphal entry of our Lord into the holy city. The gospel continues, "They come to Jerusalem, and when He was entered into the Temple," (St. Mark 11: 15,) there were certain Gentiles "who came up to adore on the festival-day; these therefore came to Philip, who was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew. Again, Andrew and Philip told Jesus." (St. John 12: 20-22.)

APPLICATION.— Let us, after the example of our Lord, hasten into His sanctuary to thank Him for any success we may have obtained; and, if obedience sends us into any town or village, let us, first of all, if possible, visit the church, to adore our Lord, and ask His blessing on our labors. Does not our indifference and lukewarmness in this respect contrast unfavorably with the behavior of the Gentiles mentioned above?

AFFECTIONS.— Ask forgiveness for your past coldness, and also ask, for the future, greater devotion and zeal.

RESOLUTIONS.— Determine that no one shall surpass you in devotion to our Lord in the sacrament of His love.

POINT II

OUR LORD FORETELLS HIS APPROACHING DEATH

CONSIDERATION.— Our Lord, having granted the request of the Gentiles, foretells, in their presence and in that of the multitude, His approaching death, speaking of it under the guise of a parable, which would shortly be made clear to them. “The hour is come,” He said, “that the Son of Man should be glorified. Amen, amen, I say to you, Unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, itself remaineth alone.” (St. John 12: 23, 24.) Thus our Lord speaks of His death and of its fruit, the conversion of the Gentiles.

APPLICATION.— What a lesson for ourselves! Our Lord gave His life for the salvation of souls, and we will not suffer; we would choose another road to heaven for ourselves and others than the royal road of the cross. What extraordinary blindness!

AFFECTIONS.— Let us, in presence of our Divine Model, be confounded at the thought of our weakness and pusillanimity, and of our constant self-seeking which renders us enemies of the cross of Jesus.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will henceforth bear my cross, if not with love and joy, at least with resignation.

POINT III

JESUS IS TROUBLED

CONSIDERATION.— “Now is My soul troubled,” continues our Lord. Wherefore was He thus troubled? It was at the thought of the cruel and shameful death which awaited Him. But He goes on, “Father, save Me from this hour;” and then adds, “Father, glorify

Thy name." A voice therefore came from heaven, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." (St. John 12: 27, 28.)

APPLICATION.— We learn from this, that the trouble we feel at some prospective humiliation or affliction is not an imperfection, still less a fault, since our Lord Himself experienced it. But do we do as He did—sanctifying it by prayer and submission to the holy will of God?

COLLOQUY with the Saint of this day, (St. John of Mattha,) founder of the Order of the Holy Trinity for the redemption of captives. (Died, 1212.)

OUR BLESSED LADY'S PRESENTATION

IN THE TEMPLE

1st Prel. Imagine our Blessed Lady, almost an infant, offering herself in the Temple.

2d Prel. Ask for grace to imitate her generosity.

POINT I

MARY GIVES HERSELF TO GOD WITHOUT DELAY

CONSIDERATION.— The Church this day celebrates the presentation of our Blessed Lady in the Temple, whither she was brought by her parents at the age of three years, and confided to the care of the pious women employed in the service of the Temple, and whom, according to custom, she was to assist and remain with until she should be of marriageable age. But the holy child entertained views widely different. Enlightened by grace from above, she had already chosen to belong to God alone, and had bound herself to Him by a vow of virginity — the first of all the daughters of Judah!

APPLICATION.— You esteem our Blessed Lady happy in having such pious parents, and in understanding at so tender an age the privilege of thus consecrating herself to God. But had you not also a holy mother, who offered you to the Lord in your infancy, and thus inspired you in later years with the idea of ratifying that offering of your own free-will? But if not, at least you gave yourself entirely to God on the day of your first communion. Have you always been faithful? Have you not, little by little, lost sight of your promises? Perhaps bad example has led you into sin, or you may have long lived in certain habitual sins. What an injury to God, what an injury to yourself!

AFFECTIONS.— Thank God. Lament your infidelities. Offer yourself anew to Him through Mary, *the refuge of sinners*.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will endeavor to repair the past by extraordinary fervor in the service of God.

POINT II

MARY GIVES HERSELF TO GOD WITHOUT RESERVE

CONSIDERATION.— Our Blessed Lady's sacrifice on the day of her presentation was perfect and entire. She gave up everything for the love of God — the society of her parents, the goods of the world — all, even the most innocent pleasure of sense, and, by her vow of virginity, the hope cherished by so many of the women of Judah of becoming the mother of the promised Messiah. Her liberty only remained; and that too she gave up, St. Anselm tells us, by a promise of obedience to the high-priest Zachary. Thus her sacrifice was entire, and what is more, perfect from the love and fervor with which she made it.

APPLICATION.— We also have offered ourselves wholly and entirely to God and His love by our religious vows. We ought each day to renew this offering of ourselves, because the obligations it involved recur each day; but do not we do so without much reflection, perhaps making certain reserves as to the use of our tongues, our eyes or our other senses, or as to the affections of our hearts, which we divide between God and the creature?

AFFECTIONS.— Beg of God to enable you to discern your infidelities; and to draw your heart to Himself, that you may be His wholly and forever.

RESOLUTIONS.— To guard against all ill-regulated affections.

POINT III

MARY GIVES HERSELF IRREVOCABLY TO GOD

CONSIDERATION.— Mary never sought to take anything back from the offering she had made; but day by day she made it more complete, more agreeable to God, thereby imprinting upon it the seal of perfection. The Almighty, in return, poured out fresh graces upon her, and Mary faithfully corresponded with each and all. This may serve to make us understood how truly the Archangel Gabriel saluted her as “*gratia plena*,” “full of grace,” “*benedicta tu in mulieribus*,” “blessed among women,” on the day of the Annunciation. But who can form an idea of the treasures of grace, acquired during the long course of years which followed the Incarnation, with which Our Lady entered the courts of the heavenly Jerusalem?

APPLICATION.— How far we are from imitating the constancy of our Blessed Mother! how faithless are we to our best-grounded resolutions! We seem to make promises to God only for the purpose of breaking them. Let us blush for our weakness, and take advantage of this festival to give ourselves entirely and irrevocably to God.

COLLOQUY with the Blessed Virgin. Congratulate her. Beg of her to present us to Jesus, and to obtain for us great and constant fervor in His service.

THE EVENTS OF MONDAY IN HOLY-WEEK :

OUR LORD CURSES THE BARREN FIG-TREE

1st Prel. Imagine our Lord cursing the barren fig-tree.

2d Prel. Ask that you may bring forth abundant fruits of salvation.

POINT I

OUR LORD'S HUNGER

CONSIDERATION.— On the evening of Palm-Sunday, our Lord “went out of the city into Bethania, and remained there; and in the morning, returning into the city, He was hungry.” (St. Matt. 21: 17, 18.) It seems probable that our Lord had fasted all the day before, and must therefore have been greatly suffering from want of food.

APPLICATION.— Our Lord, we know, frequently fasted, and the Holy Spirit no doubt specially mentions His hunger in this place for the encouragement of those who imitate His example and suffer likewise. But it is rather the spiritual than the bodily hunger of our Lord that we should here consider. How can we relieve it? By the fruit of our good works and virtues, we may set before Him daily an abundant feast. But do you do so? Do not your days bring forth little but vain and barren projects? Humble yourself, and redouble your fervor.

AFFECTIONS.— Confusion, contrition, self-oblation.

RESOLUTIONS.— To be more watchful for opportunities of doing good, and more ready to profit by them.

POINT II

OUR LORD FINDS NO FRUIT ON THE FIG-TREE

CONSIDERATION.— In the words of St. Mark, “ And when He had seen afar off a fig-tree having leaves, He came, if perhaps He might find any thing on it ; and when He was come to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the time for figs.” (St. Mark 11 : 13.) This barren tree offers a striking image of the Jewish nation, whose religion now only consisted in outward forms and in a blind adherence to the letter of the law, without imbibing its spirit or practising the virtues it prescribed.

APPLICATION.— The fig-tree also is an image of those weak and lukewarm Christians who neglect the practice of good works, and content themselves with mere prayers and outward practices, and also of the religious who has lost the spirit of his state, who performs all his exercises and actions mechanically, without the heart or mind taking part in them. Let us examine ourselves, and fear lest we fall into this state, as we may so easily do through negligence and dissipation.

AFFECTIONS.— Beg of God to grant you a great dread of dissipation, tepidity, and barrenness of heart.

RESOLUTIONS.— In the examination of conscience, I will ask myself particularly if I take sufficient pains to sanctify all my actions, even those which are in themselves indifferent, by an interior spirit and great purity of intention.

POINT III

OUR LORD CURSES THE BARREN FIG-TREE

CONSIDERATION.—“ And He^s saith to it, [the fig-tree,] May no fruit grow on thee henceforward forever! And immediately the fig-tree withered away; and the disciples seeing it, wondered, saying, How is it presently withered away? ” (St. Matt. 21 : 19, 20.)

APPLICATION.— How much greater will be the astonishment of the sinner, surprised by death in the midst of his vain projects of future conversion, when he hears the fearful words, “ Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire,” (St. Matt. 25 : 41 ;) and finds his regrets useless, and the time for bringing forth works of penance gone forever! Let this thought inspire us with zeal for the conversion of sinners, and also for our own conversion and sanctification.

COLLOQUY with the illustrious virgin and martyr, St. Cecilia, whose feast is solemnly celebrated this day, throughout the world. Her zeal produced wonderful fruits. Not only did she convert Valerian, Tiburtius, and Maximus, but she even rendered them the companions of her martyrdom. Let us offer her our congratulations, and beg of her to obtain for us that we may never deserve to be reproached as barren trees in the vineyard of the Lord, but that, on the contrary, we may produce much fruit therein.

PRINCIPAL EVENTS OF TUESDAY IN HOLY-WEEK:

THE WIDOW'S MITE; THE SCRIBES AND
SADDUCEES

1st Prel. Imagine our Lord praising the poor widow, and confounding the Scribes and Sadducees.

2d Prel. Ask that you too may merit the praises of Jesus.

POINT I

OUR LORD PRAISES THE POOR WIDOW

CONSIDERATION.— Our Lord, having returned to Jerusalem, spent great part of the day in the Temple, teaching chiefly in parables; and there, He “beheld now the people cast money into the treasury, and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she cast in two mites, which make a farthing. And calling His disciples together, He saith to them, Amen I say to you, This poor widow hath cast in more than all they who have cast into the treasury; for all they did cast in was of their abundance, but she of her want cast in all she had, even her whole living.” (St. Mark 12: 41-44.)

APPLICATION.— If old age or ill-health prevents your being employed in great labors for the service of God, or if, being young and strong, you are employed in things apparently trifling, learn from these words of our Lord that He judges our actions according to the spirit, generosity, and intention with which they are performed.

AFFECTIONS.— Acts of faith in this truth.

RESOLUTIONS.— To seek in all things only the testimony and approbation of God.

POINT II

OUR LORD ANSWERS THE SCRIBES CONCERNING THE
TRIBUTE-MONEY

CONSIDERATION.— The Scribes and Pharisees, in order to ensnare our Lord, hoping to render Him either odious to the people or criminal in the eyes of the Roman government, came to Him with a cunning devised question, “Tell us, therefore, what dost Thou think; is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar or not? But Jesus, knowing their wickedness, said, Why do you tempt me, ye hypocrites? Shew me the coin of the tribute. And they offered Him a penny; and Jesus said to them, Whose image and inscription is this? They say to Him, Cæsar’s. Then He saith to them, Render therefore to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s, and to God the things that are God’s. And hearing this, they wondered, and, leaving Him, went their ways.” (St. Matt. 22: 17–22.)

APPLICATION.— We do wrong to yield to fear and discouragement when we see the enemies of religion craftily endeavoring to ensnare. Such a weakness is injurious to God and hurtful to ourselves.

AFFECTIONS.—“In Thee, O Lord! have I hoped. Let me never be confounded.” (Psalm 30: 1.)

RESOLUTIONS.— I will cast from me all vain solicitude, and will abandon the future, with the fullest confidence, to God.

POINT III

OUR LORD ANSWERS THE SADDUCEES CONCERNING
THE RESURRECTION

CONSIDERATION.— After our Lord had thus confounded the Scribes, the Sadducees came to Him on a

similar errand. "Master," they said, speaking of a woman who had successfully married seven brothers, "at the resurrection therefore whose wife of the seven shall she be? for they all had her. And Jesus answering, said to them, In the resurrection they shall neither marry nor be married, but shall be as the angels of God in heaven." (St. Matt. 22: 24, 28-30.)

APPLICATION.— They shall be as the angels of God in heaven. What consoling words! Like those angels who are pure spirits? Yes, because our body shall rise, as the Apostle says, a spiritual body, possessed of angelic qualities — agile, lucid, subtile, and incorruptible — but still capable of enjoying sensible pleasures, the nature of which we are not now capable of conceiving. If we could picture this happy state with lively faith, we should continually sigh after its possession.

COLLOQUY.— Beg of God to grant us this grace Ask it through the intercession of the glorious martyrs whose feast we celebrate — St. Clement, and St. Felicitas with her seven sons.

CONTINUATION OF THE EVENTS OF TUESDAY IN
HOLY-WEEK :PARABLE OF THE HUSBANDMEN AND
THE VINEYARD

1st Prel. Imagine our Lord in the Temple.

2d Prel. Ask that you may gather abundant fruit from this Meditation.

POINT I

THE CARE BESTOWED UPON THE VINEYARD

CONSIDERATION.—“There was a man, an householder, who planted a vineyard, and made a hedge round about it, and dug in it a press, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a strange country.” (St. Matt. 21 : 33.) It must have been almost impossible for the Jewish priests and rulers not to have understood the meaning of this parable, so clearly does it refer to Almighty God and His chosen people, whom He blessed above all others, and who made so ungrateful a return. In the same parable, we see a striking exposition of the advantages and obligations of the religious state.

APPLICATION.—In the first place, we see described the advantages of the religious state. Almighty God, the Father of the whole human family, is also the Founder and Father of the religious state, and of each particular order. “Ego plantavi te vineam electam.” “I planted thee a chosen vineyard,” (Jer. 2 : 21 ;) He says by His prophet. The hedge enclosing this chosen vineyard is the triple rampart of vows, rules, and the watchfulness of superiors ; the wine-press, pouring out its costly juice, is an image of the religious state, from which, more than any other flows an inexhaustible stream of grace and merit ; the tower in the midst rep-

resents the tabernacle, from whence our Lord watches with a special care over those admitted into His vineyard, which He has let out to us that we may labor in it and cultivate it; whilst He appears to be at a great distance from us because hidden from our eyes, though near in reality, observing if we are faithful and diligent, and preparing us a reward proportioned to our deserts.

AFFECTIONS.—Thanksgiving for the great blessing of our vocation, of which the vineyard of the parable is a figure.

RESOLUTIONS.—To labor with renewed ardor that this vineyard intrusted to our care may produce abundant fruits of holiness.

POINT II

INGRATITUDE AND SIN OF THE HUSBANDMEN

CONSIDERATION.—"When the time of the fruits drew nigh, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits thereof; and the husbandmen, laying hands on his servants, beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants, more than the former, and they did to them in like manner; and, last of all, he sent to them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. . . . And, taking him, they cast him forth out of the vineyard, and killed him." (St. Matt. 21: 34-37, 39.)

APPLICATION.—Here our Lord refers not only to the obstinate and ungrateful Jews, but to those unhappy religious who—despite the warnings of their superiors, the representatives of God, and the inspirations of their angel guardians—leave the vine committed to their care uncultivated, and consequently produce no fruit.

AFFECTIONS.— Pray that you may never merit the reproaches which Jesus, becoming your Judge, will address to faithless and ungrateful Christians.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will often renew the resolutions of retreat, in order that I may remain faithful to them.

POINT III

PUNISHMENT OF THE HUSBANDMEN

CONSIDERATION.—“ When therefore the lord of the vineyard shall come, what will he do to these husbandmen?” This is the question with which our Lord concludes this parable. And the Jews standing by reply, unconsciously pronouncing their own condemnation: “ He will bring those evil men to an evil end; and will let out his vineyard to other husbandmen, that shall render him the fruits in due season.” And our Lord confirms it in these terrible words: “ Therefore I say to you, that the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.” (St. Matt. 21 : 40, 41, 43.)

APPLICATION.— Many religious, after long years of profession, have incurred the like penalty; would you avoid it? Be wholly unreserved with your spiritual director; not only as to your sins, but as to your temptations, your fears and doubts, and follow his advice exactly.

COLLOQUY with St. John of the Cross, who, with St. Teresa, assisted to lead back his brethren to the strict observances of Carmel, that vineyard so dear to the hearts of Jesus and Mary. His feast is celebrated this day.

COMPLETION OF THE EVENTS OF TUESDAY IN HOLY-WEEK :

OUR LORD FORETELLS THE LAST JUDGMENT

1st Prel. Imagine our Lord coming in the clouds of heaven with great power and majesty.

2d Prel. Ask that you may be always prepared to appear before the judgment-seat of God.

POINT I

SIGNS PRECEDING THE LAST JUDGMENT

CONSIDERATION.—Our Lord passes on from predicting the destruction of Jerusalem to describe the signs which shall herald the last judgment: “And there shall be signs in the sun and in the moon and in the stars, and upon the earth distress of nations by reason of the confusion of the roaring of the sea and of the waves; men withering away for fear and expectation of what shall come upon the whole world; for the powers of heaven shall be moved.” (St. Luke 21: 25, 26.)

APPLICATION.—During His mortal life, our Lord is known only as the tender Lover of mankind, the good Shepherd come to seek and save; but at this last judgment, in which He will appear to justify the dealings of Providence before the eyes of the universe, and to put to confusion the enemies of God and His Church, He comes clothed with power and majesty to appall those who have abused His long-suffering and mercy. Let us bear in mind this last judgment, and the terrible sentence to be pronounced against impenitent sinners, when tempted to evil.

AFFECTIONS.—“Pierce thou my flesh with Thy fear.” (Ps. 118: 120.)

RESOLUTIONS.—I will often meditate on my last end.

POINT II

THE ORDER OF THE LAST JUDGMENT

CONSIDERATION.—"Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven; . . . and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with much power and majesty. And He shall send His angels with a trumpet and a great voice; and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest parts of the heavens to the utmost bounds of them." (St. Matt. 24: 30, 31.) . . . "And all nations shall be gathered before Him; and He shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats; and He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say to them that shall be on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; and to them also that shall be on His left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels." (St. Matt. 25: 32-34, 41.)

APPLICATION.—Let us try to imagine the joy that will fill the hearts of the blessed at the sight of the Son of Man in heaven; they who have so generously carried their own cross here will gaze with delight upon the cross of Jesus. Consider the confusion of those faithless or hypocritical religious, whom our Lord will be forced to place on His left hand, their companions the vilest reprobates. How terrible will be this separation between the members of the same community! Where would you stand, were you to die this moment?

AFFECTIONS.—Beg of Jesus Christ that considera-

tion on the last judgment may produce in you the good which He intended when predicting it to the Apostles.

RESOLUTIONS.— In all doubts and difficulties, I will ask myself what I shall wish to have done when I stand before God.

POINT III

ON PREPARATION FOR THE LAST JUDGMENT

CONSIDERATION.— When will this last judgment be? Our Lord says, "Of that day and hour no one knoweth, no, not the angels of heaven." (St. Matt. 24: 36.) But we all know that death is near at hand to each one of us, and that judgment follows death as certainly as death life. "Take ye heed, . . . watch ye therefore; for you know not when the Lord of the house cometh; . . . and what I say to you I say to all, Watch." (St. Mark 13: 33, 35, 37.) These are the words of Christ Himself.

APPLICATION.— Would you hope for and not fear the last judgment? Prepare yourself then, by a holy life. "Estote parati." "Be ye also ready," (St. Matt. 24: 44,) says our Lord; live ever prepared. Do you do so?

COLLOQUY with St. Catherine, the good virgin and martyr of Alexandria, who in religious controversy before the Emperor Maximian, succeeded in inspiring the pagan philosophers with such fear of the judgments of God, that they abjured their errors and died martyrs.

PRINCIPAL EVENTS OF WEDNESDAY IN HOLY-WEEK :

OUR LORD REBUKES THE PHARISEES

1st Prel. Imagine our Lord denouncing the Pharisees.

2d Prel. Ask that you may never deserve such reproaches.

POINT I

THEY ARE REPROVED BECAUSE THEY REGARD ONLY
THE OUTWARD MARKS OF PIETY

CONSIDERATION.— On this, the evening preceding Holy-Thursday, when the princes and doctors of the nation, gathered together in council under Caiphas, had determined to put our Lord to death, and Judas agreed to betray Him into their hands for thirty pieces of silver, our Lord, as usual, taught in the Temple, and took the opportunity of denouncing the Pharisees, who misled the people by an outward semblance of virtue and religion. “Wo to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you tithe mint and anise and cummin, and have left the weightier things of the law. . . . Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel; . . . you make clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but within you are full of rapine and uncleanness; you are like to whited sepulchres, which outwardly appear to men beautiful, but within are full of dead men’s bones and of all filthiness.” (St. Matt. 23: 23–25, 27.)

APPLICATION.— Did our Lord address these bitter reproaches to the Pharisees alone? Did He not have in His mind those Christians, those religious who are prone to scruples and accuse themselves of trifles, whilst they make no account of grave omissions in the discharge of their duties? Truly these, when they

examine their conscience, "strain out a gnat and swallow a camel." Are there not others who only care for appearances, who wish to be regular and virtuous in the eyes of men, whilst in the sight of Heaven they are unclean and mere whited sepulchres? Do you belong to either of these two classes?

AFFECTIONS.— Pray that, by the aid of grace, you may never deceive yourself with regard to the state of your soul or the inclinations of your heart.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will devote my attention, above all else, to acquiring habits of solid virtue.

POINT II

OUR LORD REBUKES THE PHARISEES BECAUSE THEY ARE SEVERE TOWARD OTHERS AND INDULGENT TOWARD THEMSELVES

CONSIDERATION.— We find in general that hypocrites are loud in their censure of others, whilst they allow themselves great liberties. The Pharisees belonged to this class; and therefore our Lord again denounced them, saying, "Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut the kingdom of heaven against men!" (St. Matt. 23: 13;) and again telling the people that "they bind heavy and insupportable burdens, and lay them on men's shoulders, but with a finger of their own they will not move them." (St. Matt. 23: 4.)

APPLICATION.— No doubt you condemn the conduct of these hypocritical Pharisees, as did our Lord; but are you not disposed to exact much from others, your subordinates, which you do not think is required from yourself? Do you practise what you preach and advise others to do?

AFFECTIONS.— Shame, salutary fear, and repentance.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will often ask myself if I practise all that I recommend to others — if by my own words I do not condemn my conduct.

POINT III

OUR LORD REBUKES THE PRIDE AND AVARICE OF THE PHARISEES

CONSIDERATION.— Our Lord has another subject of condemnation for the Pharisees — their pride and self-interest. He says, "All their works they do for to be seen of men; for they make their phylacteries broad, and enlarge their fringes, and they love the first places at feasts, and the first chairs in the synagogues," (St. Matt. 23: 5, 6,) whilst they "devour the houses of widows under the pretense of long prayers; these shall receive greater judgment." (St. Mark 12: 40.)

APPLICATION.— The world often complains that the ministers of religion are proud and self-interested. Let us never give it any grounds for addressing such reproaches to ourselves; let us carefully examine our intentions, words, and behavior before God, and see if our conscience is clear as regards these points.

COLLOQUY with our Divine Lord. Beg of Him to enlighten you, and to preserve you from meriting the reproaches which He addressed to the Scribes and Pharisees.

EVENTS OF HOLY-THURSDAY: THE PASCHAL SUPPER

1st Prel. Imagine our Lord surrounded by His Apostles in the supper-chamber in Jerusalem.

2d Prel. Ask that you may draw abundant fruit from this Meditation.

POINT I

PREPARATIONS FOR THE PASCHAL SUPPER

CONSIDERATION.—Our Lord left Jerusalem on Wednesday evening, and slept at Bethania, returning to the city toward sunset the next day, the first day of the Azymes, or feast of unleavened bread. Then, the Apostles came to Him, saying, "Whether wilt Thou that we go and prepare for Thee to eat the Pasch? And He sendeth two of His disciples, and saith to them, Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man carrying a pitcher of water; follow him, and whithersoever he shall go in, say to the master of the house, The Master saith, Where is My refectory, where I may eat the Pasch with My disciples? And he will shew you a large dining-room furnished, and there prepare ye for us. And His disciples went their way, and came into the city, and they found as He had told them, and they prepared * the Pasch." (St. Mark 14: 12-16.)

APPLICATION.—This supper-chamber, renowned through the whole world since our Lord honored it with His presence, is an image of our heart, which our Lord deigns to make His dwelling-place in Holy Com-

* These preparations consisted in procuring a paschal lamb which was slain in the Temple and then roasted, unleavened bread, (azymes,) wine, and lettuce or other vegetables.

munion. To receive Him, it also must be, 1st, large and spacious in desires and generosity. Never let us resemble those who are satisfied with giving our Lord only what they can not refuse Him under pain of mortal sin. 2d. It must be besides well furnished — adorned with virtues, with true humility, lively confidence, and ardent love.

AFFECTIONS.— Desire earnestly that your heart may be found so prepared.

RESOLUTIONS.— To have recourse to the pious practices for devout communion indicated at the end of the volume.

POINT II

HOOR OF THE PASCHAL SUPPER

CONSIDERATION.— “ And when the hour was come, He sat down, and the twelve Apostles with Him: and He said to them, With desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with you before I suffer.” (St. Luke 22: 14, 15.)

APPLICATION.— Remark our Lord's exactness in fulfilling all the precepts of the law: His calmness at the near approach of His Passion, which must have been forcibly brought before Him at the sight of the Paschal lamb, the type of that Lamb slain from the beginning of the world — that Passion to be that day * consummated on the Cross.

AFFECTIONS.— Compassion, reverence, and love.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will endeavor, for the love of my Divine Saviour, to surmount cheerfully all difficulties which may beset me.

* That day; that is, according to the Jewish mode of reckoning, from sunset to sunset. Thus the Paschal Supper, the institution of the Eucharist, the agony in the Garden, and our Lord's death and burial all took place in one day, from Thursday to Friday evening.

POINT III

OUR LORD PREDICTS THE TREACHERY OF JUDAS

CONSIDERATION.—Judas, as we know, had on the day before promised to deliver his Lord into the hands of his enemies for thirty pieces of silver. As it would have been inconsistent with our Lord's glory to have appeared ignorant of this base betrayal, He predicted it during the Paschal Supper in these words: "Amen, I say to you, one of you that eateth with Me shall betray Me." We hear that the Apostles "began to be sorrowful, and to say to Him one by one, Is it I?" But Judas does not seem to have manifested any emotion, despite our Lord's awful denunciation of His treacherous follower: "It were better for him, if that man had not been born." (St. Mark 14: 18, 19, 21.)

APPLICATION and COLLOQUY.—Let us, at this sad spectacle of weakness and treachery in the person even of an Apostle, humiliate ourselves profoundly before God, and beseech Him to preserve us in His holy fear by aid of His all-powerful grace.

THE EVENTS OF HOLY-THURSDAY CONTINUED:

OUR LORD WASHES HIS APOSTLES' FEET

1st Prel. Imagine our Lord at the feet of His Apostles.

2d Prel. Ask that you may learn what our Lord intended to teach us by this action of His.

POINT I

OUR LORD AT HIS APOSTLES' FEET

CONSIDERATION.—The figures of the old law were about to give place to the realities of the new—the Paschal Supper to that Eucharistic Feast in which the Lamb of God gives Himself for the food of His creatures. But before proceeding to the institution of this ineffable mystery, it was our Lord's will to perform an action of almost incomprehensible humility—to wash the feet of His Apostles, not excepting Judas, intending by it to give us some idea of the purity of soul with which we ought to approach Holy Communion. “And when supper (the Pasch of the old law) was done, . . . knowing that the Father had given Him all things into His hands, and that He came from God and goeth to God, He riseth from supper, and layeth aside His garments, and, having taken a towel, girded Himself; after that He putteth water into a basin, and began to wash the feet of His disciples, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded.” (St. John 13: 2–5.) The Apostle, it would seem, only insists upon the divinity of our Lord the better to express the depth of His humiliation in the performance of this action, usually the office of slaves at the tables of nobles.

APPLICATION.—It may have been your duty to perform offices toward your brethren, the poor, or the

sick, which the world calls humiliating and disagreeable, and your pride and delicacy have made you dislike and neglect them; perhaps you have even tried to avoid them; if so, what regret you ought to feel when you call to mind the eternal Son of God washing the feet of poor sinners, those even of His betrayer Judas!

AFFECTIONS.—Shame and grief at finding your sentiments so different from those of our Lord.

RESOLUTIONS.—To profit by every opportunity of practising humility with charity.

POINT II

OUR LORD AT THE FEET OF ST. PETER

CONSIDERATION.—St. John continues, “He cometh therefore to Simon Peter. And Peter saith to Him, Lord, dost Thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said to him, What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith to Him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou shalt have no part with Me. Simon Peter saith to Him, Lord, not only my feet, but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not but to wash his feet, but is clean wholly; and you are clean, but not all.” (St. John 13: 6–10.)

APPLICATION.—We may here admire St. Peter’s humility and respect for his Divine Master; but let us take care that we never go against the manifestation of God’s will. It is a good thing to fly honors, benefices, and superiorships. The saints have done so; but to persist in refusing to accept them in spite of the express orders of our superiors would be false humility and sheer perversity. We may also so characterize the conduct of certain persons who, acting contrary to the commands of their confessors, remain away from Holy

Communion on the pretext of being unworthy, because they are not allowed to make general or useless confessions.

AFFECTIONS.—“Wash me, O Lord! yet more from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.” (Psalm 50.)

RESOLUTIONS.—I will be guided in all humility by the decision of my confessor with regard to the dispositions requisite for Holy Communion.

POINT III

OUR LORD INSTRUCTS HIS DISCIPLES

CONSIDERATION.—“Then being sat down again, He said to them, Know you what I have done to you? You call Me Master and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If, then, I, being your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet; for I have given you an example that as I have done to you so you do also.” (St. John 13: 12-15.)

APPLICATION.—Our Lord here gives us His example as the rule of our words, thoughts, and actions — in short, of our whole conduct, not by way of counsel but express precept; but does it not rather seem that instead of its being thus commanded us, it should be considered as our honor and glory to tread in the footsteps of our Master, the God made man? Why are not His humility, His zeal, His charity and self-sacrifice, our daily model? He Himself says, “If you know these things, you shall be blessed if you do them.” (St. John 13: 17.)

COLLOQUY with our Divine Saviour.

CONTINUATION OF THE EVENTS OF HOLY-THURSDAY:

THE EUCHARISTIC SUPPER

1st Prel. Imagine our Lord in the midst of His Apostles.

2d Prel. Ask to increase in the knowledge and love of ~~our~~ Divine Lord.

POINT I

THE WONDERS OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST

CONSIDERATION.— After our Lord had finished that act of profound abasement so significative of the preparation required for the eucharistic feast, He sat down to the table with the Apostles, to institute that new sacrifice of infinite merit in which He Himself was to be both priest and victim, and giving Himself to His creatures, as He was about to die for their sakes, not for that night only, but to the end of time, “knowing, that His hour was come, that He should pass out of this world to the Father; having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them unto the end.” (St. John 13:1.) O wonderful excess of divine love!

APPLICATION.— Let us consider amongst the wonders of the eucharistic feast, firstly, the infinite wisdom of our Lord manifested therein, dying for mankind, yet perpetually remaining with them; secondly, His infinite power by changing bread into His body, living and united to His divinity as it is in heaven, so that the whole substance of bread disappears and gives place to the body of the man-God, while the accidents of bread, such as taste and color, remain; lastly, His infinite goodness. The height of human love can go no further than to give its life for the beloved object; but our Lord did yet more — after dying for man, He

remains ever with him to console him, to guide him, to offer Himself for him daily, and to be his daily food. All this He does in the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, foreseeing the ingratitude of mankind toward Him therein, and the horrible profanations to which He would be exposed.

AFFECTIONS.—Fervent acts of love and gratitude, with an earnest desire to atone for the insults offered to Jesus Christ, always and everywhere present on our altars.

RESOLUTIONS.—When visiting the most Holy Sacrament, I will beg of our Lord the grace to know and love Him more and more.

POINT II

HISTORICAL EXPOSITION OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST

CONSIDERATION.—Call to mind the simple words in which the institution of the Holy Eucharist is given in the gospel narrative, “And whilst they were at supper, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke, and gave to His disciples, and said, Take ye, and eat; this is My body. And, taking the chalice, He gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, Drink ye all of this.” (St. Matt. 26: 27.)

APPLICATION.—Think, each time that you have the happiness of being present at Holy Mass, of the wonders of the last supper; imagine that the congregation, who are to receive the Blessed Sacrament from the hands of the priest, are the disciples about to partake of the same Blessed Food of Life from the hands of our Lord; fancy you hear our Lord saying, “Do this for a commemoration of Me,” (St. Luke 22: 19,) and behold Him, in the person of the priest, changing bread and wine into His adorable body and blood.

Unless this picture is present before you, you have not assisted at the Holy Sacrifice with sufficient devotion.

RESOLVE, then, to form the habit, when going to church, of thinking that you are to be present at the Last Supper, and to witness the miracles which Jesus is about to work before He dies for you.

COLLOQUY with our Divine Lord.

CONTINUATION OF THE EVENTS OF THURSDAY EVENING:

OUR LORD'S DISCOURSE AFTER INSTITUTING THE HOLY EUCHARIST

1st Prel. Draw near in spirit to the Apostles, that you may hear and taste the sweetness of our Lord's words.

2d Prel. Ask that they may bring forth in you the fruits of holiness.

POINT I

OUR LORD'S TENDER LOVE FOR HIS APOSTLES

CONSIDERATION.—A father who sees the moment of his death or departure from his children at hand feels the strength and tenderness of his love for them redouble. Thus, when our Lord knew that His hour was come, His words and actions revealed a still deeper love for His followers than He had before manifested; for the first time He calls them His little children, "Little children, yet a little while I am with you," (St. John 13: 33;) and seeing them troubled at His words, He continues, "And if I shall go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to Myself, that where I am you also may be. . . . I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you; . . . and I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you forever," (St. John 14: 3, 18, 16.) "In the world you shall have distress; but have confidence, I have overcome the world." And again, "Amen, Amen, I say to you, If you ask the Father any thing in My name, He will give it you." (St. John 16: 33, 23.)

APPLICATION.—What feelings of joy and confidence should fill our hearts at these blessed words, addressed as much to each one of us as to the Apostles! He has promised, besides, to every one that hath left

house, or brethren or sisters, or father or mother, or wife or children, or lands for His name's sake, an hundredfold, and to possess life everlasting. Let the thought console you in sadness, and bring you peace and confidence.

AFFECTIONS.— Pray earnestly that this thought may impress itself on your heart and support you in time of trial.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will meditate occasionally on the last discourse of our Lord, particularly on those days when I have the happiness of receiving Holy Communion.

POINT II

OUR LORD COMMANDS HIS APOSTLES TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER

CONSIDERATION.— As a tender father on his death-bed exhorts his weeping children to live in love and unity, our Lord commands His Apostles to love one another. Consider well the words in which our Divine Saviour urges the necessity for this brotherly love, "*Hoc est præceptum meum, ut diligatis invicem.*" "This is my commandment," that which I have most at heart, "that you love one another," (St. John 15: 12;) and He endeavors to impress on His disciples, that they should observe it in a special manner; much more than they have heretofore done. "*Ut diligatis invicem, sicut dilexi vos.*" "That you love one another, as I have loved you," (St. John 13: 34;) in a word, He tells them that a universal charity ought to be the distinctive mark of His true disciples. "By this shall all men know that you are My disciples." (St. John 13: 35.)

APPLICATION.— Strive to answer, in a worthy manner, the pressing exhortations of our Divine Master, who offers Himself as a Model. If you hope for a

place in the heart of Jesus, resolve to excel in brotherly love; to love your neighbor as our Lord has loved you, that is to say, with a *supernatural* love, based on faith; with a *universal* love, which includes every one; an *active* love, which is not alone satisfied with wishing well; a *forestalling* love, which anticipates every desire; a *sympathetic and patient* love, such as the mother bears for her child; and a *constant and lively* love, like the love of Jesus, who died praying even for those who crucified Him. See to it that your love never wavers, and believe that you can not do too much in order to excel in a virtue so dear to the heart of Jesus, and which adds such a charm to the life of those living in a community.

COLLOQUY.— Humbly prostrate at the feet of Jesus, beg of Him to enkindle in your heart the fire of divine and fraternal charity, that in you may be accomplished His words, “If any one love Me — My Father will love him, and we will come to him, and will make our abode with him.” (St. John 14:23.)

CONTINUATION AND END OF THE EVENTS OF HOLY-
THURSDAY:

THE PRAYER OF OUR LORD

1st Prel. Imagine our Lord raising His eyes to Heaven, surrounded by His Apostles.

2d Prel. Ask that you may comprehend the prayer of our Lord, and profit by it.

POINT I

OUR LORD PRAYS FOR HIMSELF

CONSIDERATION.— Our Lord had begun His public life by prayer; He ends it in like manner. “Lifting up His eyes to heaven,” St. John tells us, “He said, Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son may glorify Thee.” He asks to be loved, known, and served by all men, but only for the glory of His Father; He prays also for His elect, “that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.” He asks it as the price of His merits. “I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do.” (St. John 17: 1, 3, 4.)

APPLICATION.— We may here learn from our Lord, 1st. Not only to begin all our good works by prayer, but to end them in like manner, by asking God’s blessing on them. 2d. To be zealous for our own souls, glorifying God by a holy life, that we may attain salvation. Many, whilst they are watchful for the souls of others, neglect their own. 3d. To perform all our actions with great care and diligence, so that at the end of our lives we may be able to say, as our Lord did, “I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do.”

AFFECTIONS.— Pray for a strong and steadfast will to obey the precepts of your Divine Master.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will, every evening, examine seriously all my actions, in order that I may accomplish them more perfectly from day to day.

POINT II.

OUR LORD PRAYS FOR HIS APOSTLES

CONSIDERATION.— Remark that our Lord first asks that His Apostles may be united in heart and mind. “Holy Father,” He prays, “Keep them in Thy name whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as We also are.” (St. John 17:11.) Next, that they may preserve their innocence in the midst of the temptations of the world. “I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from evil.” (St. John 17:15.) Lastly, their sanctification. “Sanctify them in truth,” (St. John 17:17,) that is, in the practice of the truths I have taught them.

APPLICATION.— What sacrifices do you make to maintain, 1st, with those about you that union of heart and mind so strongly insisted on by our Lord? 2dly, that purity of conscience? and, 3dly, that holiness of life that consists in the practice of virtues not only exterior but interior?

AFFECTIONS.— I will make an act of thanksgiving to our Lord, who asks these three graces for me of His Father; and I will beg of Him to aid me to acquire them in an eminent degree.

RESOLUTIONS.— In examining my conscience, I will keep this end in view.

POINT III

OUR LORD PRAYS FOR ALL THE FAITHFUL

CONSIDERATION.—Our Lord continues, “And not for them only” (His Apostles) “do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in Me, that they all may be one as Thou, Father, in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us.” (St. John 17: 20, 21.) He asks for them, besides, that they may be partakers of His glory. “Father, I will that where I am they also whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me, that they may see My glory which Thou hast given Me.” (St. John 17: 24.)

APPLICATION.—Blessed prayer of our Lord, that after eighteen hundred years still produces such wonderful effects!

COLLOQUY with our beloved Saviour.

VIGIL OF THE FEAST OF ST. FRANCIS XAVIER: *

MOTIVES FOR CONFIDENCE IN THIS GREAT SAINT

1st Prel. Imagine St. Francis Xavier interceding for us in heaven.

2d Prel. Ask that you may understand the three great motives which should induce us to ask his intercession with confidence.

POINT I

THE CREDIT THIS SAINT POSSESSES WITH ALMIGHTY GOD

CONSIDERATION.— We may form some idea of the credit St. Francis Xavier enjoys with God by calling to mind the favors and miracles obtained by his invocation in various parts of the world. Besides the twenty-four persons whom he raised from the dead, and the eighty-eight other miracles mentioned in the process of canonization, it has been judicially proved that since his death his intercession has restored to life twenty-seven others in the Indies. The Bishop of Malacca has deposed to eight hundred miracles in his diocese alone; and in many localities of Europe where this saint is particularly honored — for instance, in Polamo, in Calabria and Oberburg in Lower Styria — extraordinary favors have been obtained by devoutly invoking him.

APPLICATION.— Do not such considerations inspire you with unbounded confidence in this great saint — you in particular who, as religious, vowed to the active service of God, to a certain degree resemble St. Francis

* Born, April 7th, 1506; first vows at Montmartre, August 15th, 1534; priest and solemnly professed, 1537; sailed for the Indies, April, 1541; entered Japan, August, 1549; died, December 2, 1552.

Xavier? Choose the favors you desire he should obtain for you, and what means you should make use of to efficaciously implore his intercession.

AFFECTIONS.— Let us thank God, who has given us such a powerful protector; and ask with boundless confidence the favors which we seek through his intercession.

RESOLUTIONS.— To reflect on the Festival of tomorrow. Prepare to celebrate it worthily. Rejoice at the prospect of the graces which you may hope to obtain.

POINT II

THE CHARITY OF ST. FRANCIS XAVIER

CONSIDERATION.— St. Francis Xavier's charity for his neighbor may be called his ruling passion. More than once he might be seen, though Legate Apostolic, begging from door to door in Goa for both Portuguese and Indians in distress. His charity was generous and heroic; nothing — neither danger nor death — could stay it; it was universal; none were excluded from it. If the saint showed any preference, it was for those who blamed or opposed him.

APPLICATION.— The charity of Xavier being not less great now than during his life on earth, his credit with God is increased rather than diminished. How, then, can we fear to invoke him and not be heard? Why should he have less charity for you than for others? Hitherto it may be that want of confidence has prevented your obtaining what you asked; this want of confidence often proceeds from an error against which we need warning: we believe ourselves unworthy to be heard. We are too apt to think that the efficacy of prayer depends wholly on the merit of the man who offers it.

AFFECTIONS.—Faith in the mighty charity of Xavier. Confidence and hope.

RESOLUTIONS.—To ask much, and with great confidence.

POINT III

ST. FRANCIS XAVIER'S INSATIABLE ZEAL FOR SOULS

CONSIDERATION.—St. Francis Xavier was specially distinguished by zeal for souls, shown in his eagerness for their conversion to the faith, and which no difficulty nor danger could diminish. Once when his friends entreated him not to expose himself to certain death by a voyage to a distant and solitary island, he replied, "Would not traders go thither were gold to be found there, and can I hesitate when there are souls to be saved instead?"

APPLICATION.—We, like St. Francis Xavier, have left everything to devote ourselves as he did for the salvation of our neighbor, and thus may believe that he will regard us with peculiar favor, and be one of our warmest intercessors with Heaven, drawing down blessings both on ourselves and on our undertakings.

COLLOQUY with the saint. Rejoice with him at the influence which God is pleased to grant him. Beg of him to employ it for our sanctification, and for the conversion of heretics and pagans, especially those of India, China, and Japan.

FEAST OF ST. FRANCIS XAVIER

1st Prel. Imagine the saint looking down upon us from heaven.
2d Prel. Ask that you may understand the wonders which grace worked in St. Francis Xavier.

POINT I

THE ADMIRABLE WORKS OF THE SAINT

CONSIDERATION.— We may say with Bourdaloue that in St. Francis Xavier were renewed all the prodigies worked by the Apostles; endowed as they were with miracles and the gift of tongues, he equaled and even surpassed many of them in the number of conversions he effected, and the distances he traversed, computed at three times the circumference of the globe, baptizing with his own hand more than twelve hundred thousand heathen, visiting over two hundred kingdoms, overturning innumerable idols, planting churches in every place, and even penetrating Japan, where the sound of the Gospel had till then never reached.

APPLICATION.— On hearing of such wonders, we are sometimes tempted to complain of our limited sphere of action, and we think if it were enlarged we could better imitate so great a saint and do more in the service of God, whilst we neglect our own obligations and the observances of our state. Fatal illusion! Thus certain young Jesuits, students at Coimbra, were greatly desirous of following St. Francis Xavier to India; he replied, "Brothers, I highly approve of your zeal, but be not deceived, no one can excel in great matters who has not first excelled in lesser ones." Meditate and profit by this answer.

AFFECTIONS.— Pray for grace to do so with courage and generosity.

RESOLUTIONS.—To be very faithful in little things, while waiting to be called to greater.

POINT II

ADMIRABLE HUMILITY OF ST. FRANCIS XAVIER

CONSIDERATION.—The humility of St. Francis Xavier was not less wonderful than his miracles. Whilst his name was resounding throughout the whole world, he disappeared from his own eyes, hidden as it were in God, esteeming himself an unworthy servant; when congratulated on his success, he replied, "If God works any good through me, it is due to the prayers and merits of my brethren in Europe." From this humility sprang his profound respect for his Superior, St. Ignatius, to whom he never wrote but on his knees, entreating him in nearly every letter to send some one who would watch over, direct, and stimulate him.

APPLICATION.—Humility should surely be easy to us who do so little for God, yet we are still full of ourselves and sensitive to a degree; why are we so different from St. Francis Xavier? Because we do not know ourselves as he did. "Know yourself," says St. Augustine, "and you will be humble."

AFFECTIONS.—Humble yourself. Declare your unworthiness with fervent prayer.

RESOLUTIONS.—To carry out the views of St. Francis Xavier by using every means to extend the great work of the propagation of the faith.

POINT III

ADMIRABLE PIETY OF ST. FRANCIS XAVIER

CONSIDERATION.—Another wonderful feature in the character of this great saint was, that he united in the

highest degree the perfections of the contemplative life with those of the active. Even during his sleep he held communication with God; his favorite ejaculation was, "O sanctissima Trinita!" "O most Holy Trinity!" and whenever he kissed the crucifix, he bathed it with his tears. God was pleased to work a miracle in honor of the saint's devotion, at five thousand miles' distance from the scene of his labors, in the castle of his family; where, during the ten years of his missionary life in India, the crucifix was found on each successive Friday covered with sweat.*

APPLICATION.—We complain of a distaste for prayer, of the coldness of our communions, attributing both to the multiplicity of our occupations. St. Francis Xavier is a proof of our own error; if we applied ourselves as he did to prayer, with fidelity and perseverance, we should lose all that we complain of, and receive piety as well as the other gifts of God.

COLLOQUY with St. Francis Xavier.

* Hence the well-known and useful devotion of the "ten Fridays."

ON GENEROSITY IN THE SERVICE OF GOD

1st Prel. Contemplate our Lord carrying the generosity of His love for us so far as to sacrifice Himself on the altar of the Cross.

2d Prel. Ask for a spirit of generosity in the service of God.

POINT I

THE NATURE OF GENEROSITY

CONSIDERATION.— The generosity in the service of God which we have so recently been admiring in St. Francis Xavier may be defined as a moral or an acquired virtue, which leads a man to surmount courageously all the difficulties of his state, office, spiritual exercises, etc.

APPLICATION.— If we really comprehend what generosity is, we shall appreciate and desire it. How is it to be acquired and increased? By considering the greatness of the God we serve, His goodness, His love to us, the many claims He possesses to our gratitude and entire devotion. If such thoughts were always before our minds, as they were before that of St. Francis Xavier, we should be generous as he was, and ready to do and dare all for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

AFFECTIONS.— An earnest desire to attain to the knowledge of God's greatness, and to serve Him with increased generosity.

RESOLUTIONS.— To be generous in little things, that, when occasion requires, we may be so likewise in greater.

POINT II

NECESSITY OF GENEROSITY

CONSIDERATION.— If you reflect upon the definition of generosity above given, you will easily perceive its necessity. To the ungenerous, the fulfilment of duty becomes a painful burden, imperfectly performed, or thrown upon others, leaving them old and invalided before the time. They go back instead of advancing in virtue; their charity, mortification, and zeal languish; their spiritual exercises suffer, and are gone through with tepidity and indevotion. Without generosity, what becomes of regular observance and religious discipline? For instance, we find pretexts for not rising promptly, and this first imperfection leaves its mark on the whole day; we become accustomed to habitual infractions of the rule, and at last are regular only in name.

APPLICATION.— If experience has unfortunately taught you that these are indeed the sad consequences of want of generosity in the service of God, humble yourself before Him, asking Him to renew in you the spirit of this necessary virtue.

AFFECTIONS.— Ask pardon for your past pusillanimity. Beg of God to give you a docile and generous heart.

RESOLUTIONS.— On awaking, excite yourself to generosity in the service of God, saying to yourself, Courage, O my soul! Yet another day is granted us to give God proofs of our love and devotion, and to lay up treasures which we may enjoy eternally in heaven.

POINT III

THE ADVANTAGES OF GENEROSITY

CONSIDERATION.—The greatness of the advantages of generosity is admirably summed up in these few words from the *Spiritual Exercises*: “In proportion as a soul is generous in the service of God, she experiences the effects of her liberality, and becomes day by day a more fit recipient of heavenly gifts and graces.” This explains to us the rapid progress made by the saints in the practice of the most exalted virtues.

APPLICATION.—You desire to resemble the saints in this respect; you can do so according to the measure of grace given you. Two things are needed, as Thomas à Kempis tells us: “Forcibly to draw one’s self from what nature is viciously inclined to, and fervently to follow up the good one is most in need of.” (*Imitation*, I. chap. 25.)

COLLOQUY with our Holy Patron, or with St. Barbara, who is specially invoked for protection against sudden and unprovided death. Her Feast occurs this day.

PREPARATION FOR THE FEAST OF
THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

1st Prel. Imagine a field covered with thorns and briars; in the midst, a lily of dazzling whiteness.

2d Prel. Ask that we obtain a due appreciation of the motives which should induce us to prepare carefully for this feast—motives as regards God, Our Lady, and ourselves.

POINT I

MOTIVES REGARDING GOD

CONSIDERATION.—What was the intention of the Most High in thus preserving our blessed Lady from the stain of original sin inherited by every other descendant of Adam? He willed to glorify her above all the saints of both the old and the new law, because He had chosen her as the Mother of the Eternal Word according to the flesh. And what is our intention in celebrating this festival, and in thus preparing for it beforehand? Our intention is that of God Himself; we unite ourselves to Him in the work of glorifying our blessed Lady.

APPLICATION.—We can best prepare ourselves for this feast—*1st.* By often saying to ourselves that the whole Catholic world, joined to the heavenly host, is making ready to celebrate this stupendous privilege of our dearest Mother. *2d.* By exciting in ourselves an ardent desire to yield to none in celebrating it worthily.

AFFECTIONS.—Ask of God this pious desire, no less pleasing to Him than to Mary.

RESOLUTIONS.—To guard against forgetfulness, fix on some moment during the day in which to recall to mind the Festival and the pious aspirations which it has awakened in your heart.

POINT II

MOTIVES REGARDING OUR BLESSED LADY

CONSIDERATION.— The privilege of her Immaculate Conception is that dearest to the heart of our blessed Lady, and to possess it she would have willingly sacrificed all the others bestowed upon her, the divine maternity not excepted. How pleasing, therefore, must be to her our devout preparation for this festival!

APPLICATION.— How can we best please our blessed Lady in this preparation? By carefully avoiding all that is displeasing to her, or that can tarnish the purity of our soul in her eyes.

AFFECTIONS.— Beg of the Blessed Virgin to obtain for you an ever-increasing horror of sin, and the grace to lead a pure life in the midst of the depravity of the world.

RESOLUTIONS.— To watch carefully over ourselves, especially in such circumstances as have already caused us to experience our own weakness.

POINT III

MOTIVES REGARDING OURSELVES

CONSIDERATION.— God wills, the doctors of the Church teach us, that all graces come to us through our blessed Lady's hands. She intercedes for all the faithful, but, like an earthly mother, has a peculiar predilection for those of her children who try to please her *specially*. By devoutly celebrating this festival, instituted in honor of her dearest privilege, we are sure of not only becoming agreeable to her, but of sharing her special favors; and by thus defending the interests of our blessed Mother, we most effectually provide for our own.

APPLICATION.—A third means of preparation for this great festival is to redouble our fervor, and to excite within ourselves those virtues which are particularly dear to our blessed Lady, such as humility, charity, and piety.

COLLOQUY with St. Alphonsus Liguori, whose devotion to the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin was so great, and who received from her so many favors in return. Let us ask Him to present us to Mary, to offer her our pious desires, our homage and affection, and to obtain for us abundant grace to remain faithful to our good resolutions, particularly during this day.

SECOND DAY OF PREPARATION :

ON AVOIDING VENIAL SIN

1st Prel. As in the last Meditation.

2d Prel. Ask that you may have an ever-increasing horror of venial sin.

POINT I

VENIAL SIN DISFIGURES US IN THE EYES OF OUR
BLESSED LADY

CONSIDERATION.—In the view of pleasing our blessed Lady, and of obtaining her special favors, let us endeavor to acquire great purity of conscience, and principally by avoiding venial sin, because it is specially odious to her. Every venial sin, it is certain, disfigures us in her eyes, tarnishing as it does the beauty of a soul purchased by the blood of her Divine Son.

APPLICATION.—What a powerful inducement for avoiding venial sin, above all, habitual venial sin. How can we hope to obtain signal favors from that purest of Mothers if soiled by its approaches? Perhaps it is your venial sins which have hitherto prevented her granting your request.

AFFECTIONS.—Placing yourself in spirit at the feet of your beloved Mother, renounce from your heart every inordinate affection.

RESOLUTIONS.—To watch over yourself during the day with particular care, that you may spend at least one day without sin.

POINT II

VENIAL SIN IS IN SOME SORT CRUELTY TOWARD OUR
BLESSED LADY

CONSIDERATION.— This may at first appear an exaggeration, but it is not so in reality. Venial sin it was as well as mortal, that caused the sufferings of our Lord; venial sin even now can wound His sacred heart, and through the Son grieves the Mother.

APPLICATION.— What, then, have I done as often as I have deliberately committed a venial sin? I have said, if not in words in act, "O Mary, my Mother! I love thee with all my heart; I love Jesus thy Divine Son; I would not for the world wound Him mortally, but I care little for wounding Him slightly." Can we hope to obtain anything from her immaculate heart, whilst we thus treat Him who is her very life?

AFFECTIONS.— Humble yourself. Have recourse to the inexhaustible goodness of Mary, the "Refuge of Sinners."

RESOLUTIONS.— To combat and banish, by means of the particular examination, those venial faults into which you are especially liable to fall.

POINT III

VENIAL SIN SEPARATES US FROM OUR BLESSED LADY

CONSIDERATION.— The child who tenderly loves his mother suffers in her absence and pines for the moment of beholding her. Thus St. Stanislaus and several other saints tenderly devoted to our blessed Lady sighed after death, that they might enjoy the sight of their beloved Mother, and be eternally united to her in heaven.

APPLICATION.— But what have you done in so heed-

lessly committing venial sin, adding fresh debts to your already heavy account? You have added to your purgatory, to the time which is to keep you away from your Mother perhaps by years. How is it that this thought has not restrained you?

. COLLOQUY with St. Stanislaus Kostka. Beg of him earnestly to obtain for us some share in the solid and affectionate devotion to Mary through which he gained such signal favors.

THIRD DAY OF PREPARATION :

THE PRACTICE OF VIRTUE

1st Prel. As in the former Meditation.

2d Prel. Ask by the Immaculate Conception of our blessed Lady the grace of growing in virtue.

POINT I

MARY A MODEL OF HUMILITY

CONSIDERATION.— Let us try on this, the eve of this great feast, to obtain our dearest Mother's favors by exciting ourselves to the practice of humility, obedience, and patience, three virtues by which she was especially distinguished. It was her humility that raised her to those surpassing heights of grace and glory. All her life she loved to be hidden, forgotten, and considered as nothing. Already the Mother of God, she makes herself the servant of her cousin Elizabeth. During her thirty years' residence at Nazareth, she passes for an ordinary woman. During our Lord's public life, she hides herself when He is honored and followed, and appears only when He is despised and deserted. She is not present when He enters Jerusalem in triumph; but she is to be found at the foot of the cross on which He dies loaded with insults.

APPLICATION.— Has not my conduct been precisely the reverse of all this? Have I not been vain of the little good there is in me, avoided humiliations, and sought the esteem and applause of men? What should I do in future?

AFFECTIONS.— Admire and extol the humility of Mary, combined as it was with such pre-eminence, and

blush for your own pride, which is allied to so great sin and misery.

RESOLUTIONS.— In temptations to vanity and pride, say with the humble publican, “O God, be merciful to me a sinner.” (St. Luke 18: 13.)

POINT II

OUR BLESSED LADY A MODEL OF OBEDIENCE

CONSIDERATION.— The manner in which Our Lady practised obedience shows how highly she esteemed this virtue, and how greatly she desires to see it practised by her children. Her obedience was supernatural, and thus universal and heroic. She obeyed a heathen emperor by her journey to Bethlehem; the Mosaic law by conforming to the rite of purification, from which in reality she was exempt; and, though superior in merit and dignity to St. Joseph, she obeyed him in everything as her lawful spouse.

APPLICATION.— If you would be a true child of Mary, you must be obedient not only in easy things but in all; your obedience must be based on love and faith, seeing God in the person of your superiors, and receiving their orders as the expression of His will. Have you done so?

AFFECTIONS.— Excite in your heart an ardent desire to attain the perfection of obedience; offer this desire to God, through Mary.

RESOLUTIONS.— To foresee and prepare for opportunities of carrying out this desire.

POINT III

MARY A MODEL OF PATIENCE

CONSIDERATION.— Another virtue which specially distinguished Our Lady was her patience, her entire and perfect resignation to the Divine will in every event of her life. No creature had ever so many or so painful sufferings, no mother was ever so wounded through her affections; but never did murmur or complaint hover on her lips; she was modest in prosperity, not cast down in adversity, even rejoicing in tribulation, because it made her more like to her Divine Son, and gave her an opportunity of showing Him her love.

APPLICATION.— We are frequently called upon to practise patience and resignation. How are we affected by adversity? Are we not tempted to discouragement, and, when prosperous, are we not disposed to vanity and boasting? Let us ask our blessed Lady to make us docile hearers of these words of our Lord's, "Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart, and you shall find rest to your souls." (St. Matt. 11: 29.)

COLLOQUY with the most Blessed Virgin; unite in heart and spirit with her numerous children, who on this, the eve of her great Festival, raise supplicating hands toward her in every part of the world, to entreat her blessings. Unite your prayers to theirs. Ask much and you will obtain much.

FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

1st Prel. Imagine the Holy Father, Pius the Ninth, surrounded by all the members of the Sacred College, and a multitude of bishops from the four quarters of the world, proclaiming the dogma of the Immaculate Conception.

2d Prel. Ask that your love for our blessed Mother may ever increase in strength and perfection.

POINT I

ANNIVERSARY OF THE FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

CONSIDERATION.— On this day, so dear to Mary's children, we celebrate in the first place the moment in which Almighty God showed her through the distance of ages to our first parents as the Virgin Mother of the Divine Redeemer, the woman destined to crush the head of the serpent. And as by eternal decree she was miraculously exempt from all stain of original sin, and endowed with the richest treasures of grace and sanctity, it is meet that we should honor her glorious prerogatives by this special Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

APPLICATION.— What is our first obligation on this great day? We should join in spirit with the blessed in heaven, and rejoice with our dear Mother, not only for her own sake, but for ours, her children, who are partakers of her glory and happiness.

AFFECTIONS.— Joy and congratulation.

RESOLUTIONS.— Let us, to-day and during the Octave, repeat frequently these words, applied by the Church to the Holy Virgin, "*Tota pulchra es, et macula non est in te.*" "*Thou art all fair, O Mary! and there is not a spot in thee.*" (Cant. 4:7;) as well as the following, which she places so frequently on our

lips, "*Causa nostræ lætitæ, ora pro nobis.*" "Cause of our joy, pray for us." (Litany.)

POINT II

ANNIVERSARY OF THE PROMULGATION OF THE DOGMA OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

CONSIDERATION.— Secondly, we are called upon to celebrate that ever-memorable day, the 8th day of December, 1854, which raised the Immaculate Conception of our blessed Lady from a pious belief to the dignity of a dogma of the Infallible Church, causing universal joy amongst the entire body of the faithful, and recalling to mind the enthusiasm awakened so many centuries before when the Council of Ephesus, in 431, proclaimed Mary the Mother of God.

APPLICATION.— The rulers of the Church and the faithful in general had the same object in view in so ardently desiring the dogmatic definition of Our Lady's Immaculate Conception; they knew that it would to a certainty bring down abundant graces from the Queen of Heaven; and we, this day and during all the octave, should implore her powerful protection in behalf of the whole Church, that she may confound the machinations of the enemies of religion, behold her Son's desire accomplished, and the whole world "*unum ovile et unus pastor,*" "one fold and one shepherd." (St. John 10: 16.)

AFFECTIONS.— Humble and fervent prayers addressed for this end and with this intention to Mary Immaculate.

RESOLUTIONS.— For this end let us unite in intention, with all the children of Mary, offering the Communion of this day, the Holy Mass, the Rosary, with all our actions, pains, and sufferings, and reciting frequently from our hearts and with our lips the pious

aspiration, " Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee! "

POINT III

ANNIVERSARY OF THE ASSEMBLING OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL AT THE VATICAN

CONSIDERATION.— The memory of this, the third anniversary which we celebrate to-day, is destined to pass through successive generations even to the end of time. On this day, in the year 1869, the nineteenth General Council of the Church was solemnly inaugurated by the glorious Pontiff, Pius IX., in presence of more than six hundred cardinals, patriarchs, archbishops, bishops, and prelates, assembled from all quarters of the globe. It was decreed by Providence that the date of this important event should coincide with the anniversary of the proclamation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception — doubtless in order to signify that we are indebted for such a signal favor to the honor paid to her, through whom God ordains that all blessings shall reach us.

APPLICATION.— In order that this, the latest grace accorded to the Church through the intercession of the Queen of Heaven, may become a means of salvation to each one among us, let us strive to excite in our hearts the fervent gratitude to which she possesses so many claims, and to give her fresh proofs of our love by imitating those virtues of which she is the noble example. Let us pray that she may intercede for us with her Divine Son, and obtain for His Holy Church the consolation of seeing the benefits of the General Council diffused throughout the most distant regions, and extended over all time.

COLLOQUY with the Immaculate Virgin, our beloved Mother.

SERIES OF MEDITATIONS ON THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES:
ON THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

1st Prel. Imagine that you hear the Almighty saying through Moses, "I am who am." (Exod. 3: 14.)

2d Prel. Ask Almighty God to give you a lively sense of His presence and His majesty.

POINT I

MY REASON REMINDS ME OF GOD

CONSIDERATION.—All that is within me cries out unceasingly, "Memento Creatoris tui." "Remember thy Creator," (Eccles. 12: 1;) my reason, also, however little I consult it, says, "I exist, therefore God exists." Nothing can proceed from nothing; if there had ever been a moment in which nothing existed, nothing would ever have existed. An eternal, uncreated, and infinite Being there then must have been from all time; reason proclaims it, faith affirms it. "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth."

APPLICATION.—I think so often of myself, of all around me, and yet so little of God, from whom I derive my being, my very thoughts. I need something exterior to myself to remind me of Him, when all that is within me ought to bring Him to my mind and make me praise, love, and adore Him. Must I not be habitually dissipated to live thus as it were a stranger to myself?

AFFECTIONS.—"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and let all that is within me praise His holy name!" (Ps. 102: 1.)

RESOLUTIONS.—To endeavor to walk constantly in the presence of God.

POINT II

THE UNIVERSE REMINDS ME OF GOD

CONSIDERATION.—It is impossible not to call to mind the Creator of heaven and earth when we gaze at the stupendous works of His hands. If a clock reminds us of a clockmaker, or a palace of its architect, how much more must the sight of this vast globe, and the still vaster planetary system, of which it is but an infinitesimal part, cause us to bow in adoration before its mighty Author, and exclaim with the royal prophet, "The heavens shew forth the glory of God, and the firmament declareth the work of His hand." (Ps. 18: 2.) "O Lord our Lord, how admirable is Thy name in the whole earth!" (Ps. 8: 2.)

APPLICATION.—Why does not the sight of the wonders of creation bring God continually before us, and fill us full of the profoundest adoration? It is because we have become so accustomed to them from infancy, and we require therefore to make special meditation upon God and His works in order that the subject may produce its due effects upon us.

• **AFFECTIONS.**—Reflect on the happiness of the saints — those spiritual and contemplative men whose souls were elevated to God and transported with delight on witnessing the least of the wonders of creation. Pray that you may participate in their happiness.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will devote myself with renewed fervor to meditation, and the contemplation of the infinite perfections of God.

POINT III

THE TESTIMONY OF THE WHOLE WORLD REMINDS
ME OF GOD

CONSIDERATION.— Every age and people have paid their homage to God and to His attributes. Cicero, the prince of Roman orators, says, "There is no nation to be found so savage as to be ignorant of the existence of God." And again, "Where is the man so deprived of reason, who, when he gazes upward, is not convinced that there is a God who governs the world?" The chief of the first American tribe visited by the Spaniards, when groaning under the tyranny of his conquerors reproved them in these words, "White men, you are stronger than ourselves; but one day the Great Spirit who reigns above will punish you as you deserve."

APPLICATION.— Oh! in what sublime concert all creatures from every age unite in bearing testimony to Almighty God! All nature proclaims Him, and calls upon us to bless and glorify Him. "He made us, and not we ourselves." (Ps. 99:3.) "Oh! praise the Lord, all ye nations, praise Him, all ye peoples." (Ps. 116:1.)

COLLOQUY with your Angel Guardian, who contemplates the infinite greatness of God in the Divine essence, and in the assemblage of the works of the Almighty. Beg of your good angel to bring often to your mind and heart the thought of God.

ON THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES, CONTINUED:

THE ESSENCE AND INFINITE PERFECTION
OF GOD

1st Prel. Imagine you hear the Apostle saying, "All things were created by Him and in Him." (Col. 1:16.)

2d Prel. Ask for an increase in the knowledge and love of God.

POINT I

GOD AN INFINITE BEING, OUR SOVEREIGN GOOD

CONSIDERATION.—As God is in His essence infinite and eternal, His perfections are necessarily countless and immeasurable. From Him all existing or possible creatures derive their being—innumerable worlds, nations, kingdoms, and empires, the ranks of the heavenly host, the infinite variety of animals, plants, and minerals, each precious stone, each delicious scent or sweet sound. Whoever possesses God, possesses and enjoys all these things; but as they are nothing in comparison to God the Sovereign Good, he enjoys incomparably more in the possession of God alone, than he would in possessing them all without God, their author and their source.

APPLICATION.—Do not such reflections show you more clearly than ever your enviable lot in giving up all for God, to insure His eternal possession here and hereafter? and do not they make you feel the force of God's promise to His faithful, "Ego sum merces tua magna nimis." "I am thy protector, and thy reward exceeding great," (Gen. 15:1;) and of the favorite ejaculation of so many saints, "Deus meus et omnia." "My God and my all"?

AFFECTIONS.—Acts of thanksgiving. Contempt for all that is not God, or that does not lead to Him.

RESOLUTIONS.— To see and seek God alone in all things.

POINT II

GOD AN INCOMPREHENSIBLE BEING

CONSIDERATION.— The creature being finite, the Creator infinite, and the finite not being capable of comprehending the infinite, it follows that God can not be comprehended by any created intelligence, not even by the very angels themselves. The knowledge of the wisest of men, of the highest of saints, is unequal to the task. He is, as the Psalmist says, “an ocean without shore or bottom.” Those blessed souls admitted to the Beatific Vision in all its fulness, who contemplate Him through all eternity, ever find fresh beauties and perfections which eternity itself can not exhaust.

APPLICATION.— As long as we live, let it be our endeavor to increase in the knowledge of God; for the more we know Him the more we shall love Him; and in proportion to our love here will be our glory hereafter, and consequently our eternal bliss in heaven.

AFFECTIONS.— Repeat often the admirable prayer of St. Augustine: “Noverim te; noverim me.” “Grant me, O Lord! to know Thee, and to know myself!”

RESOLUTIONS.— To choose frequently as subjects of meditation the attributes and perfections of God.

POINT III

GOD AN ETERNAL, UNCHANGEABLE BEING

CONSIDERATION.— God has existed from all eternity. He could neither spring into being from Himself, nor

at the command of another. His eternity is infinite, incomprehensible. St. Augustine speaks well when he says, "*Æternitas ipsa Dei substantia.*" "Eternity is God." This eternal God exists purely and simply, without division of past and future. He is likewise unchangeable, both in will and action. When we read in the Scriptures that He repented Himself, or that He was moved, it is a mere mode of expression adapted to our feeble intelligence.

APPLICATION.—"From all eternity God has loved me, bringing me out of nothing into eternity — into a forever blessed eternity, if I so will. With what love and gratitude should I not be filled at the thought? Should it not make me constant and unchangeable in my service of God?" This should be our practical conclusion.

COLLOQUY with the Immaculate Virgin Mother, exclaiming in a holy transport of joy and admiration, "He that is mighty hath done great things to me!" (St. Luke 1: 49.)

ON THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES, CONTINUED:

SIMPLICITY AND IMMENSITY OF GOD

1st Prel. Imagine a single ray which gives light to the whole world.

2d Prel. Ask God to enlighten and to inflame you with His love.

POINT I

SIMPLICITY OF GOD

CONSIDERATION.—The infinite perfection of God does not admit the idea of form or composition, from which the angels, the simplest of created beings, are not excluded. He is a spirit, infinitely pure and simple, despite His immensity and His various attributes. These perfections or attributes are divided and distinguished, because otherwise we could neither conceive nor express them; but in reality the power, justice, wisdom, and mercy of God are one—the infinite, unchangeable, and eternal Being whose relations with creation are only those of cause to effect, of the Creator to the creature. These things are infinitely above our feeble comprehension, but they are nevertheless the teachings of faith.

APPLICATION.—Our Lord teaches us to aspire to the infinite perfections of God the Father: “Be ye therefore perfect, as also your Heavenly Father is perfect.” (St. Matt. 5:48.) We can best do so by the practice of simplicity. True simplicity consists in abhorring and avoiding all duplicity and affectation in word or action, particularly in our relations with superiors. To them we should freely open our whole hearts, and stand before them such as we believe ourselves to be before God, disclosing motives and intentions with entire frankness and sincerity. Do we act thus?

AFFECTIONS.—An earnest desire to merit the praise bestowed by Jesus on Nathanael: "Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is no guile."

RESOLUTIONS.—To imitate the Blessed John Berchmanns, who said, "I will be ever before my superiors, as limpid water in a crystal vase."

POINT II

IMMENSITY AND OMNIPRESENCE OF GOD

CONSIDERATION.—Although God in His essence is absolutely simple, He is also immense and illimitable. "Heaven and the heavens of heaven can not contain Thee." (3 Kings 8:27.) He is therefore everywhere present; He is with us in prayer, in temptation, in sorrow, in each and every action. His goodness preserves, His wisdom guides, and His power directs us. It matters little where obedience places us, for we can go nowhere where He is not. "In ipso enim vivimus et movemur et sumus." "In Him we live and move and are," (Acts 17:28,) just as a fish exists, lives, and dies in the water that surrounds and sustains it. "As often as I breathe, I converse with God," said a holy father of the desert.

APPLICATION.—These truths should lead us, 1st, to behave with the same propriety at every time and in every place, remembering that we are never alone, unseen, or unheard. 2d. To be content with pleasing God alone, and not to seek the esteem and approbation of men, even of our superiors. 3d. To find a pure intention and frequent ejaculatory prayers much easier in practice. 4th. To be persevering and courageous in difficulty and suffering. Even if we seem abandoned by man, God our all will be our witness and our reward. Thus shall we become truly interior servants of God, and holy religious.

COLLOQUY with the Holy Virgin. Beg of her, during this octave of her Immaculate Conception, to obtain for us the graces which should result from meditation on the attributes of God, His admirable simplicity and incomprehensible immensity.

ON THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES, CONTINUED:

OMNIPOTENCE, SANCTITY, AND HAPPINESS OF GOD

1st Prel. Imagine you hear our Lord saying, "The things that are impossible with men are possible with God." (St. Luke 18: 27.)

2d Prel. Ask for the knowledge and love of God.

POINT I

OMNIPOTENCE OF GOD

CONSIDERATION.—Whenever we call to mind the creation of the world, we are at once struck with the omnipotence of God; to create, that is, to make any thing out nothing, presupposes infinite power. God is, therefore, omnipotent. "God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth," by a word, or rather, by an act of His will, formed out of nothing this vast and wonderful universe. "He spoke, and they were made: He commanded, and they were created." (Ps. 148: 5.) And a single act of His will could as instantly recall the whole into nothing, or as instantly create millions of new worlds.

APPLICATION.—A few years ago I did not exist. It was the power and goodness of God that drew me out of nothing. "He made us, and not we ourselves," says the Psalmist. I therefore belong entirely to Him, and should make use of all my bodily and mental faculties only according to His holy will manifested to me by His commandments, by my rule, and by my superiors. "Esto fidelis usque ad mortem, et dabo tibi coronam vitæ." "Be thou faithful unto death," so runs His promise, "and I will give thee the crown of life." (Apoc. 2: 10.)

AFFECTIONS.—Admiration, joy, and gratitude in the consideration of my noble origin and the greatness of my destiny.

RESOLUTIONS.—To make it your first care to discern and accomplish in all things the will and pleasure of God.

POINT II

SANCTITY OF GOD

CONSIDERATION.—The sanctity of God being inherent to His infinite essence, is likewise necessarily infinite. “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!” (Apoc. 4:8,) sing the blessed in heaven before His throne. In virtue of this His attribute, God loves above all things the good that we do, whilst He hates the evil in like proportion. “Dilexisti justitiam et odisti iniquitatem.” “Thou hast loved justice and hated iniquity.” (Ps. 44:8.) This attribute besides renders God incapable of erring in what He has revealed to us, or of being unfaithful to His promises.

APPLICATION.—“Be holy, because I am holy.” (Lev. 11:44.) Holiness is not enjoined, it is commanded us. How, then, can I obtain this sanctity which God requires of me? 1st. By carefully preserving my soul from every stain, and by purifying it as perfectly as possible from those which it contracts despite my vigilance. 2d. By adorning my soul with virtues in order to please God, creating anew His image within us, “in justitia et sanctitate veritatis,” “in justice and holiness of truth.” (Eph. 4:24.)

AFFECTIONS.—“Sanctificetur nomen tuum.” May Thy name, O Lord! be hallowed in my soul! in all that I am, and in all that I do!

RESOLUTIONS.—To reflect often on these words of the Holy Ghost, “Et sanctus, sanctificetur adhuc.”

"He that is holy, let him be sanctified still." (Apoc. 22: 11.)

POINT III

HAPPINESS OF GOD

CONSIDERATION.—God, as well as being infinitely holy, powerful, wise, and just, is necessarily infinitely happy, or, to speak more accurately, He is to Himself and in Himself supreme and infinite bliss, the source from which angels and saints draw throughout all eternity joys which are never exhausted, and are ever new.

APPLICATION.—Let us rejoice that we are called to share in the blessedness of the saints, even in that of God Himself; above all, let us rejoice in the thought that this blessedness is increased according to our merit. "*In domo Patris mei mansiones multæ sunt.*" "In My Father's house there are many mansions," (St. John 14: 2,) says our Lord; and again, "*Thesaurizate autem vobis thesauros in cœli.*" "Lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven." (St. Matt. 6: 20.)

COLLOQUY with Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of sanctity.

ON THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES:

THE KNOWLEDGE, BEAUTY, AND SWEET-
NESS OF GOD

1st Prel. Imagine you hear the Apostle crying out, "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God!"

2d Prel. Ask for an increase of the knowledge and love of God

POINT I

THE KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF GOD

CONSIDERATION.— Both our natural understanding and our acquired knowledge are limited in their extent, and subject to error; but it is not so with God. God being an infinite and eternal Being, has neither past, future, limits, nor change. He sees at once and without effort all that actually is, all that is possible, all that has been or will be, our thoughts, dispositions, and intentions, whether for good or evil, the most secret aspirations of our hearts. "*Omnia autem nuda et aperta sunt oculis ejus.*" "All things are naked and open to His eyes." (Heb. 4: 13.)

APPLICATION.— These thoughts are full of consolation for the religious who strives to live in the fear of God, and who can truly say with St. Peter, "*Domine, tu omnia nosti: tu scis quia amo te.*" "Lord, Thou knowest all things: Thou knowest that I love Thee," (St. John 21: 17;) but they are as full of terror for the religious who is satisfied with being one only exteriorly, and who seeks the applause and esteem of men, whilst in the eyes of God he is a worldly-minded hypocrite, a whited sepulcher, full within of dead men's bones and all filthiness, like the Scribes and Pharisees rebuked by our Lord.

AFFECTIONS.—Acts of faith in all that appears incomprehensible with regard to the omniscience of God and to the compatibility of his foreknowledge with the free-will of man.

RESOLUTIONS.—To walk always in perfect sincerity in the presence of God, taking no heed of the praise or blame of men.

POINT II

THE BEAUTY OF GOD

CONSIDERATION.—Call to mind the numberless beauties of this vast universe. Above us extends the firmament, studded with a million of resplendent stars at night; in the day made brilliant by the glorious sun that rises and sets with equal splendor. Around us we behold fields, woods, valleys, and hills adorned with an infinite variety of trees, plants, flowers, and fruit, inhabited by every species of animal, many of surpassing beauty of form and color. And the beauties of our mind and soul, and those of the angels, if we could see them, would be found infinitely superior to all created things; yet all are but the feeblest reflection of the infinite beauty of God. Ah! could we but behold it for a moment only, nothing here would ever charm us more; we should see that nothing was worth loving but God alone.

APPLICATION.—If the sight of any earthly beauty ever tempts you, turn away your eyes quickly and raise them toward God, the Infinite Beauty, saying with the Psalmist, "*Ostende faciem tuam et salvi erimus.*" "Shew us Thy face, and we shall be saved." (Ps. 79: 4.) If the temptation continue, implore, as He did, the help of the Most High, "*Deus, in adiutorium meum intende: Domine, ad adjuvandum me festina.*" "O God, come to my assistance; O Lord, make haste to help me." (Ps. 69: 2.)

AFFECTIONS.—Repeat and dwell upon these words of St. Augustine, “O Beauty, ever ancient and ever new! too late and too little have I loved Thee!”

RESOLUTIONS.—I will strive to acquire the habit of raising my heart to God on witnessing the beauties of creation.

POINT III

THE SWEETNESS OF GOD

CONSIDERATION.—Mildness or sweetness is one of the most beautiful qualities of man; therefore it proceeds from God, the source of all beauty, and, as He is infinite, He possesses in it infinite perfection. “*Videte quoniam suavis est Dominus.*” “Oh! taste and see that the Lord is sweet,” (Ps. 33: 9,) are the words of King David. If He imposes commands upon us, He strengthens us to fulfill them by His powerful grace, He encourages us by the hope of a magnificent reward, and if we fail he is ever ready to pardon. “*Multus est Dominus ad ignoscendum.*” “He is bountiful to forgive.” (Is. 55: 7.)

APPLICATION.—Do you deserve it to be said of you, as has been said of so many saints, “Severe to himself, indulgent to others”? Where are your mildness and sweetness? See how far you have failed, and how you should correct yourself.

COLLOQUY with the Virgin and Martyr St. Lucy, whose Feast we celebrate this day.

ON THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES, CONTINUED:

ON THE PROVIDENCE, JUSTICE, AND
MERCY OF GOD

1st Prel. Imagine you hear David saying, "The Lord ruleth me, and I shall want nothing." (Psalm 22: 1.)

2d Prel. As in the former Meditation.

POINT I

THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD

CONSIDERATION.— When we call God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, we acknowledge His providence, shown in His care for all His creatures, but for man most particularly, made in His own image, and for a supernatural end. No earthly father could, without sin, be indifferent as to his children's welfare; how much more, then, must our merciful Heavenly Father interest Himself in our happiness! He cares for each one of the nine hundred millions of men who people this globe as if he were alone upon earth, because, by reason of His immensity, He is everywhere equally present. Holy Scripture thus touchingly speaks of the paternal tenderness of God, confirmed by the belief of every nation: "Can a woman forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? And if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee in My hands; thy walls are always before My eyes." (Isaia 49: 15, 16.)

APPLICATION.— The admirable and amiable action of divine Providence, you must have frequently remarked upon in observing the general course of events, and that of your own life in particular. *Admirable,*

because it can draw good from evil, as in the case of Joseph becoming the deliverer of his brothers who sold him; and uses the machinations of the wicked to advance the cause of God and His Church, as is proved by the experience of eighteen hundred years. *Amiable*, because it has led you, despite dangers and obstacles, to the blessed end of your vocation.

AFFECTIONS.—Exclaim with the Psalmist, in a transport of admiration and gratitude, “*Dominus regit me, et nihil mihi deerit.*” “The Lord ruleth me,” yes, all proves that God watches over me, “and I shall want nothing,” (Psalm 22: 1;) the past is my security for the future. “In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped, because Thou hast saved my soul out of distresses.” (Psalm 30: 1, 8.)

RESOLUTIONS.—Boundless confidence in the providence of God.

POINT II

THE JUSTICE AND MERCY OF GOD

CONSIDERATION.—These two divine attributes are far from being contradictory; one is the necessary consequence of the sanctity of God, which obliges Him to punish sin and reward virtue; the other is the consequence of His goodness, which we instinctively acknowledge when we call Him the good God. This goodness is spoken of as patience or longanimity awaiting the penitent, as mercy in the pardon of the sinner. “The Lord is compassionate and merciful, long-suffering and plenteous in mercy.” (Psalm 102: 8.) As God is infinite, so are His justice and mercy, rewarding the just with everlasting glory, and the wicked with everlasting punishment. “*Non tardat Dominus promissionem suam, sicut quidam existimant, sed patienter agit propter vos, nolens aliquos perire, sed*

omnes ad pœnitentiam reverti." "The Lord delayeth not His promise, as some imagine, but dealeth patiently for your sake, not willing that any should perish, but that all should return to penance." (II. St. Peter 3:9.) Witness the pardon graciously extended to the good thief and to so many other illustrious penitents.

APPLICATION.—Are you not yourself a living proof of the long-suffering and mercy of God, whom you have so often provoked, even perhaps after having often received His loving forgiveness? And He has returned you good for evil. Have you not cause to blush at your severity toward your brethren, or toward sinners who do not amend as quickly as you desire? Ask pardon, and promise for the future to endeavor to imitate the long-suffering and patience of God.

COLLOQUY with the Lord God, your Father, who has created you from nothing, watched over your preservation, pardoned you so generously, loaded you with His benefits, and prepared for you a magnificent reward in heaven.

THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES: CONTINUATION AND END

GREATNESS AND MAGNIFICENCE OF GOD

1st Prel. Imagine you hear the Psalmist exclaiming: "Great is the Lord . . . and of His greatness there is no end." (Ps. 144:3.)

2d Prel. Ask for thoughts and sentiments worthy of the greatness of God.

POINT I

THE GREATNESS AND MAGNIFICENCE OF GOD IN
HIS WORKS

CONSIDERATION.—The idea of greatness implies something that commands respect; and respect is the first homage we owe to God. Besides, the idea of God's *infinite* greatness, of itself, puts us in mind of all the divine attributes. Hence, it is through this idea of greatness that Holy Writ is continually reminding us of God. "Great is the Lord . . . and of His greatness there is no end." (Ps. 144.) To get an idea of the infinite greatness of God, let us view Him in His works, in this vast and wonderful planetary system, in which the Earth is one of the smaller bodies. This planet of ours no doubt seems to us very large, and it is so in truth: its circumference is over 24,000 miles, so that a man, traveling uninterruptedly at the rate of 27 miles a day, would take two years and a half to go round the world. But the sun being nearly 2,800,000 miles in circumference, a journey round it, at the same rate, would require more than 100,000 days, or 281 years. Is there not something fearful and almost appalling in the thought of such a mass? And yet, it well-nigh disappears before the probable magnitude ascribed by astronomers to the fixed stars, whose incal-

culable distance makes them appear so small. And all this, compared with God, is less than a grain of sand set by the side of a mountain!

APPLICATION.— Let us call to mind these thoughts, whenever we pray; when we are in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, or when preparing for Holy Communion; when tempted to offend God, or when striving to grieve for having offended Him. The thought of God's greatness and grandeur will keep up within us feelings of deep humility, of respectful and saving fear, of unswerving fidelity and devotedness.

AFFECTIONS.— How great art Thou, O Lord! and how little am I! "My substance is as nothing before Thee." (Ps. 38: 6.)

RESOLUTION.— To resume, from time to time, these meditations on the attributes of God.

POINT II.

THE GREATNESS AND MAGNIFICENCE OF GOD AS REVEALED IN THE WONDERS OF THE FIRMAMENT

CONSIDERATION.— To form a still more striking idea of the infinite greatness and of the magnificence of God, let us consider the distance which separates us from the sun. This distance being about 95,000,000 miles, the circumference of the orbit which our planet annually describes around the sun cannot be far from 600,000,000 miles. Now, imagine the spherical space whose superficies is determined by the Earth's orbit, and whose center is the sun; what an immense expanse for the flights of fancy! God fills this space. What if we consider the space encircled by the orbit of Neptune, the most distant planet, 30 times farther away from the sun than we are — that is, about 2,800 millions of miles! And what is this in comparison with

that immense void in which the fixed stars shine, at a distance from the sun 100,000 times greater than that of our Earth, 100,000 times 95,000,000 miles! God fills this space. But the thought which overpowers us and makes us, as it were, dwindle into nothing, is that there are, in the opinion of famous astronomers, some fixed stars so enormously remote that their light has not yet reached us, though it has been traveling toward us ever since their creation at the rate of 192,000 miles a second. Again, each of these stars, and their number is incalculable, is, like our sun, the center of an entire system of planets, or of a universe of heavenly bodies vaster than the one we ourselves behold. Now, these millions of worlds, that defy all our arithmetic and every stretch of fancy, what are they, compared to God? "As a drop of the morning dew," says the Wise Man (Wis. 11:23), which is absorbed by the first rays of the sun.

APPLICATION.—And it is this great God who has deigned to become man, to become a little infant, for our sake, in the stable of Bethlehem. O ineffable and incomprehensible mystery of self-abasement and love! We are nearing the anniversary of this great event, the sweet and beautiful feast of Christmas. The novena we begin to-morrow will greatly help us to celebrate it worthily and with fruit.

COLLOQUY with the Lord our God. "O Lord our Lord, how admirable is Thy name in the whole earth. . . . I will behold Thy heavens, the works of Thy fingers: the moon and stars which Thou hast founded. What is man that Thou art mindful of him?" (Ps. 8:2, 4, 5.) "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and never forget all He hath done for thee. . . . Bless the Lord, all ye His angels: you that . . . execute His word. . . . Bless the Lord all His works: in every place of His dominion, O my soul, bless thou the Lord!" (Ps. 102:2, 20, 22.)

NOVENA OF CHRISTMAS:

REASONS FOR MAKING IT WELL

1st Prel. Ponder the words of Isaias the Prophet, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the wilderness the paths of our God." (Isaias 40: 3.)

2d Prel. Ask that you may have a due appreciation of the reasons for making this Novena with suitable dispositions.

POINT I

CHARACTERISTICS OF THIS FESTIVAL: OUR FIRST REASON

CONSIDERATION.—The Feast of Christmas is at once the first and last of the Ecclesiastical Festivals; it is the last in the order of time, coming as it does at the close of the year; but it is the first in the order of our Lord's life; and as such we may not doubt it was celebrated each returning year by Him and by His blessed Mother.

APPLICATION.—Are not these sufficient reasons for endeavoring to celebrate this Novena, not only with joy and eagerness, but with particular devotion? Should we not endeavor, besides, to make reparation for the lukewarmness with which we have too probably celebrated the previous festivals of the year?

AFFECTIONS.—Disown and repent of your past faults. Ask grace fully to atone for them.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will now decide on all that I must do, during the coming nine days, to please the Infant Jesus, and prepare my heart for the reception of His graces.

POINT II

THE EXAMPLE OF THE CHURCH : OUR SECOND REASON

CONSIDERATION.— Remark in how many ways our Holy Mother the Church distinguishes the Festival of Christmas. 1st. She precedes it by the four weeks' preparation of Advent. 2nd. She permits Holy Mass to be celebrated at midnight. 3d. She permits every priest to say three Masses in honor of the threefold birth of our Lord — His being born of His Father from all eternity, His temporal birth at Bethlehem, and His spiritual birth in the hearts of the Faithful. 4th. She dispenses from abstinence whenever Christmas-day falls on a Friday.

APPLICATION.— We, the devout children of a Holy Mother, should see from these things how earnestly the Church exhorts us to prepare ourselves for this great festival. She not merely counsels us, she as it were obliges us to do so; but it is surely an obligation full of sweetness to celebrate as fervently as possible the birth of Him who is at once our Redeemer and our Father.

AFFECTIONS.— Let us excite in our hearts a desire to surpass, during this year, all that we have hitherto done, even at the time of our greatest fervor.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will endeavor to regain the fervor of that blessed time when my devotion always increased on the approach of the great Festival.

POINT III

GRACES ATTACHED TO THE FESTIVAL OF CHRISTMAS :
OUR THIRD REASON

CONSIDERATION.— Our Lord, who is ever ready to dispense graces and favors to all that ask them, is, we

may believe, specially disposed to grant our requests on the joyful day upon which, for the love of us, He entered this vale of tears, the consoler of our exile and our exceeding great reward.

APPLICATION.— We may therefore confidently hope to obtain at this holy season all the graces that we most require, either in effectually overcoming our habitual defects, or in advancing to that degree of perfection to which God has called us, but on the sole condition that we prepare ourselves to receive them. Let us see what special favor we desire from the Holy Child, and decide upon the particular practices of this Novena.

COLLOQUY with the Blessed Virgin Mary, whose mind and heart were so perfectly disposed to receive in abundance the graces and blessings of the God-Saviour.

DISPOSITIONS REQUISITE FOR THE SUCCESS OF THIS NOVENA

1st Prel. Imagine you hear these words of Moses, "Do what is pleasing in the sight of the Lord thy God." (Deut. 13: 18.)

2d Prel. Ask earnestly for the light and strength you need in making this Novena.

POINT I

ARDENT DESIRE

CONSIDERATION.—No one is disposed to bestow gifts and favors upon those who do not value them. The gifts of divine grace are above all price. Whoever does not ardently desire them shows that he can not fittingly appreciate them, and will therefore have but a trifling share in the blessings of this holy season. This fervent desire is what our Lord requires of you in the first place.

APPLICATION.—To further stimulate this ardent desire, reflect on your poverty and misery, on your weakness in virtue, and the little preparation you have yet made for a holy death. Such thoughts will cause you to sigh for the coming of your Lord, as the sick man does for the visit of his physician.

AFFECTIONS.—"Come O Desired of nations! Come to save us! Come to redeem us! Do not delay!" (Ant.)

RESOLUTIONS.—Frequently during the day repeat these aspirations of the Church, which recur, at this season, in almost all the hours of the divine office.

POINT II

GREAT CONFIDENCE

CONSIDERATION.—To ardent desire we must join great confidence. When we invoke God with entire confidence, we glorify Him by proclaiming His power, His goodness, and His munificence; and to do so is, for that reason, very pleasing to Him. We see in the Gospel that our Lord made this confidence one of the principal conditions for obtaining His favors. When two blind men came to Him to be healed, He asked them first, "*Creditis quia hoc possum facere vobis?*" "Do you believe that I can do this unto you?" And when they replied in the affirmative, He continued, "*Secundum fidem vestram fiat vobis.*" "According to your faith be it done unto you: and their eyes were opened." (St. Matt. 9: 28, 29.)

APPLICATION.—Want of confidence is a defect to be found in most of our prayers. We feel too often a lurking presentiment that our petitions will not be granted — a presentiment founded on the imperfect idea we entertain of the goodness of God, contrasted with our own unworthiness, saying, "What can so miserable a creature as myself expect from Almighty God?" We mistake: it is precisely because we are so weak and miserable, so incapable by ourselves of either strength or virtue, that we have so imperative a claim on the goodness of God. Our Lord has said, "They that are in health need not a physician, but they that are ill." (St. Matt. 9: 12.)

AFFECTIONS.—"In Thee, O Lord! have I hoped. Let me never be confounded." (Psalm 30: 2.)

RESOLUTIONS.—When tempted to discouragement, I will have recourse to God with confidence.

POINT III

GREAT GENEROSITY

CONSIDERATION.— Our Lord desires to bestow His gifts upon us, but He requires us to co-operate with Him, and to co-operate generously. His liberality will be in proportion to ours, and consequently the graces and favors of this holy season to our generosity toward Him during the Novena.

APPLICATION.— Should not such thoughts stimulate us to make peculiar efforts during these few remaining days? Let us see what in us is displeasing in the sight of God, and what He particularly asks from us, that we may destroy the one and acquire the other.

COLLOQUY with Jesus, for whose Feast we prepare. Beg that He would deign Himself to bestow on us the dispositions in which He wishes to find us on the anniversary of His birth.

OBSTACLES TO THE SUCCESS OF THE NOVENA

1st Prel. Imagine you hear the voice of the Prophet Isaias saying, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the wilderness the paths of Our God." (Isaias 40: 3.)

2d Prel. Ask for grace to surmount the three principal obstacles to the success of the Novena.

POINT I

FIRST OBSTACLE: INDIFFERENCE

CONSIDERATION.— A benefactor is naturally indisposed to grant fresh favors to those who, after receiving kindness at his hands, treat him with carelessness or indifference. For instance: a father has six sons; he prepares a great feast for them; five seem to care little or nothing about it; the youngest on the contrary, spares neither pains nor toil to make all pass off as brilliantly as possible: the father has done his part; with which of his sons is he best pleased? No doubt with the youngest; can you blame him?

APPLICATION.— The practical lesson is easily seen; equally clear is the answer to the question, Why do so many Christians, so many religious even, receive no extraordinary favors at this Christmas festival? Draw a suitable conclusion.

AFFECTIONS.— Deplore the revolting indifference of many Christians; beg of Jesus to take pity on their blindness, and to assist you to banish from your heart all tendency to tepidity.

RESOLUTIONS.— To be very faithful, during this day, in carrying out your resolutions for the Novena, and rather to perform some additional good work than to omit any of those on which you have determined.

POINT II

SECOND OBSTACLE: DISSIPATION OF MIND

CONSIDERATION.— The second obstacle, from which the first generally springs, is dissipation. In the midst of the bustle of the world, the thousand news of the day, the anxiety and pressure of household cares, commerce, employment, business, the mind of man can hardly take in or dwell on the thoughts regarding faith, or do what the interests of his own soul require, or prepare rightly for the great solemnities of religion, and especially the feast of Christmas. The greater number of men are in this miserable state; and, alas! it is to be feared that many will only leave the turmoil of temporal business to enter upon a miserable eternity.

APPLICATION.— Let us thank God that we have left the turmoil of the world, but let us remember that dissipation can also penetrate into the interior of religious houses and prevent religious from preparing themselves to keep the great feasts of the year as they ought. This will certainly be the fate of him who goes into the world more than he need, who devotes himself with too much natural impetuosity to his employment, even if it be the sacred ministry, and who does not love silence, retreat, and recollection. See how far you recognize yourself in this picture, and what you have still to do that Jesus Christ may be born in your heart on the glorious feast of Christmas.

AFFECTIONS.— Ask the grace and strength requisite to surmount all obstacles which may oppose your reception of the graces destined for you at the Feast of Christmas.

RESOLUTIONS.— To endeavor to spend this and the coming days in great recollection.

POINT III

THIRD OBSTACLE: WANT OF PERSEVERANCE

CONSIDERATION.— The third obstacle to the success of our Novena is our inconstancy, the levity of our minds, that excessive fickleness of our will which makes us begin good works and never finish them, continually change our good resolutions, or give them up almost as soon as we have formed them. Does not experience tell us, regarding Novenas in particular, that as soon as the first day is over we relax our observance of the practices agreed upon, omit them occasionally, and even forget them altogether?

APPLICATION.— Let the experience of the past give us a lesson; let it be in this Novena of preparation for the loveliest of feasts, as an ever-warning voice reminding us of our inconstancy, keeping us continually on our guard against ourselves, stimulating and preserving our fervor until the closing day.

COLLOQUY with the Mother of the God-Saviour. On this day we celebrate the Festival instituted in her honor under the name of “the expectation of the most Blessed Virgin.” Beg of her to obtain for you a share in the sentiments which animated her during the days immediately preceding the birth of Jesus.

ON THE MYSTERY OF CHRISTMAS

1st Prel. Behold St. John the Evangelist writing, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." (St. John 1:14.)

2d Prel. Beg the grace of understanding the wonderful mystery of God becoming a mortal and feeble man.

POINT I

WHO IS THIS WORD MADE FLESH?

CONSIDERATION.—Who is this Word, become visible to our eyes in mortal flesh? The Word Eternal, the second Person of the Holy Trinity, consubstantial with the Father; it is God, Creator of heaven and earth, become a mortal man and still remaining God; uniting, without mixture or alteration, the human and divine nature in one Divine Person. What a mystery of wisdom, power, and love! But especially, what a mystery of abasement! The omnipotent God become a little child for us!

APPLICATION.—If your faith in this mystery of abasement was more lively, instead of cherishing feelings of vanity and murmuring when you are humiliated, you would be ashamed of even an involuntary feeling of vanity, and you would love and seek for humiliations. Such were at least the feelings and dispositions with which the memory of the cradle of Bethlehem and those words of the Apostle, "*Sed semetipsum exinanivit, formam servi accipiens.*" "Emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant," (Phil. 2:7,) inspired the saints.

AFFECTIONS.—Animate your faith. Admire the profound humiliation of the Incarnate Word. Detest your pride and vanity.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will endeavor to revive these sentiments in my heart on hearing or pronouncing the

words of the Angelus, "Et verbum caro factum est."
 "And the word was made Flesh."

POINT II

WHY DID THE WORD BECOME FLESH?

CONSIDERATION.— We know why the Word became a fallible and mortal man, but we do not think enough of it; it was to raise us up from degradation, and save us from that eternal perdition which we had incurred from the rebellion of our first parents. No creature, neither man nor angel, could ever do it; because Divine Justice demanded a satisfaction equal to the offense, and proportioned to the infinite Majesty of God; a satisfaction of which a creature, who is essentially limited, is incapable. The Incarnate Word alone could do both, in suffering for us as man and as God, and making those sufferings of infinite value.

APPLICATION.— It is entirely by the mystery of the Incarnation that we have regained our former dignity of children of God, and our rights to a heavenly inheritance, and that we have the consoling prospect of passing from this sorrowful life to the joys of a blessed eternity. What deep gratitude we owe to our Saviour God, who wrought this mystery of reconciliation, as St. Paul says, "Cum adhuc peccatores essemus." "When as yet we were sinners." (Rom. 5: 8.)

AFFECTIONS.— Beg of our Lord to help you to love Him more ardently, with a love free from all self-interest.

RESOLUTIONS.— Say, and often repeat these words, so familiar to St. Francis Xavier: "My God and Redeemer, I love Thee, not because of Thy promises or threats, but because Thou art my King and my God."

POINT III

WHY WAS THE WORD MADE FLESH SO GREATLY
HUMILIATED?

CONSIDERATION.— It would have been sufficient for the Son of God, in order to redeem us and repair what we had lost, to have united Himself to a body exempt from suffering, like that of Adam before he sinned, and to breathe forth one sigh for guilty man; but He chose to endure all the humiliations and all the infirmities of our humanity, and to be born like other men. And why? Because He wished to draw all hearts to Him, and bind them to Him forever by this manifestation of an *excess of love*; as St. John the Evangelist expresses it, “Propter nimiam charitatem suam, qua dilexit nos.” (Eph. 2 : 4.)

APPLICATION.— And the greater number of men give no other return to all their Redeemer's love for them than indifference, forgetfulness, and ingratitude! And we, who by many titles belong to this God of love, how do we love Him? Is it not with reserve, with parsimony; only doing what He has the strict right to demand from us? And if we do anything beyond this, is it not coldly and with many imperfections? That we may repair the past and give a proof of our good-will, let us to-day add something to what we had resolved to do during the Novena.

COLLOQUY with the angel who announced to the shepherds the great and joyful mystery for which the Church calls on all her children to prepare with care.

ELECTION, PREROGATIVES, AND DISPOSITIONS OF THE
MOTHER OF THE WORD INCARNATE

1st Prel. Behold the Archangel Gabriel saying to Mary, "Thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus." (St. Luke 1:31.)

2d Prel. Beg the grace of increasing in the knowledge, esteem, and love of our blessed Lady.

POINT I

ELECTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

CONSIDERATION.—No man has the power of choosing his mother, for it is evident that he who does not exist can do nothing. But there was one Man who could do it, the Man God, Jesus our Saviour. Essentially eternal according to His divine nature, He could and did from all eternity choose her who was to be the Mother of His human nature, for He had determined to come into the world as other men did. His choice fell on the daughter of Joachim and Anne, the issue of the royal blood of David, and, by alliance, of the priestly line of Aaron; and by this choice of divine predilection Mary became the most excellent and happiest of creatures.

APPLICATION.—Let us rejoice in the thought of the election made by the Incarnate Word of the Blessed Virgin; let us rejoice still more because, by the gift of that same Word, Mary has become our own Mother; but never let us forget that, as children of that holy and perfect Mother, we should strive after sanctity and perfection, even if we were not obliged to do so by our vows. For this end let us redouble our efforts during this Novena.

AFFECTIONS.—"Pray for us, Holy Mother of God, that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ." (Office of the Church.)

RESOLUTIONS.—To disseminate, as far as possible, devotion to Mary, and thus gain her an increase of glory.

POINT II

PREROGATIVES OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

CONSIDERATION.—"God does not leave His works incomplete," says the theologian St. Thomas, "He always proportions His graces and prerogatives to the dignity to which He pleases to call His creature, so that it may worthily fulfill its obligation." It pleased Him to call the Virgin Mary to the greatest dignity to which a human creature can be raised, therefore He gave her extraordinary and exceptional graces and prerogatives: 1st. He preserved her from original sin. 2d. He confirmed her in grace, so that the beauty of her soul was never tarnished by the least actual sin. 3d. He gave her the joys of maternity together with the glory of virginity. 4th. He endowed her with the plenitude of the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost from the first moment of her existence. 5th. From this moment, also, according to the opinion of many of the fathers, He gave her the use of reason, so that she was not a minute without loving her God and increasing her merits.

APPLICATION.—When God has called you by the choice of His gratuitous predilection to the religious state, raised you, perhaps, to the priesthood, and thus given you a greater dignity than other men, He has not left His work incomplete — He has proportioned the help of His grace to it; He has given you special and superabundant graces. How have you corresponded with them?

AFFECTIONS.— Lively gratitude. Salutory fear of not corresponding fully with grace.

RESOLUTIONS.— To place no limits to the generosity which justice and gratitude require from you.

POINT III

DISPOSITION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

CONSIDERATION.— The life of our Lady, from her birth to the moment of the Incarnation, was a continual preparation for that great event. She prepared for it by great watchfulness over all her senses and the movements of her heart, although she had not to fear, as we have, a surprise from disorderly passions. She prepared herself by retirement from the world, solitude, silence, and recollection; living in the temple, from three years old, there she prepared herself by continual prayer and meditation, together with ardent desires, to see the Saviour of the world.

APPLICATION.— It is by attaining similar dispositions and by employing these same means that we ought to prepare for the great feast of Christmas. Have you done it? See in what you have failed, and try to make up for it by fervor during the days that still remain of this Novena, and your desires will be fulfilled; Jesus will come to you with an abundance of His benedictions.

COLLOQUY with the holy Virgin, Mother of God and Our Mother.

ON THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE TIME

IN WHICH THE SAVIOUR APPEARED *

1st Prel. Behold the Apostle saying, "When the fullness of the time was come, God sent His Son." (Gal. 4:4)

2d Prel. Beg the grace of waiting patiently for the time of God's visits and consolations.

POINT I

CONSIDERATION.—When did the Saviour of the world appear upon the earth? Four thousand years after He was promised to our first parents, after forty centuries of preparation, waiting, sighs, and desires for Him from the just men of the Old Testament. And why did He delay His coming for so long a time? The fathers answer, "If the satisfaction and restoration had closely followed the offense, man would never have learnt the full extent of the moral degradation caused by sin, nor the impossibility of raising himself out of it, and consequently the greatness of the benefit of redemption." In the mean time the world was not left without the means of salvation. It had the promise and certainty of a Redeemer, and men could be saved by the expectation and merits of the future Redeemer; and history shows us this *expectation* generally existing among all nations.

APPLICATION.—It is God's will that we should have a deep conviction of our misery and helplessness before He visits us and bestows His gifts, that we may appreciate them better, be more grateful, and derive greater profit from them.

AFFECTIONS.—Admire and adore the goodness of

* Those who prefer a Meditation on the Feast of the Apostle St. Thomas, celebrated this day, are referred to Vol. I, p. 321.

God in the work of the redemption of the world and the sanctification of His faithful servants.

RESOLUTIONS.—To wait henceforth with greater patience for the time of grace, and to be more persevering in prayer.

POINT II

CONSIDERATION.—When did the Saviour of the world appear on the earth? When all the prophecies and types announcing the characters of the Messiah were *entirely* accomplished by these divers figures and prophecies, which became century after century more precise and detailed; God willed to prepare the world by degrees to believe the most wonderful of all mysteries—the divinity of the Gospel, and the institution of the Church of Christ.

APPLICATION.—Thus also does God deign to condescend to our weakness. He helps us to believe, by multiplying, when necessary, motives for our faith, just as He helps us to practise virtue and to obey Him in difficult matters, by multiplying the succors of His grace. Have you not experienced this in critical circumstances, particularly as regards your vocation?

AFFECTIONS.—Admiration and gratitude for the goodness and condescension manifested by God towards us.

RESOLUTIONS.—Beg of God that He would Himself prepare our minds and hearts for the reception of His gifts.

POINT III

CONSIDERATION.—When did the Saviour of the world appear on the earth? The fortieth year of the reign of the Emperor Augustus, when nearly all the

people of the known world submitted to the Roman empire and were ruled by the same laws, and the whole world was at peace. This immense extent of the Roman empire, the fourth of the monarchies foretold by David, together with universal peace after seven centuries of war, was visibly arranged by Providence to facilitate the propagation of the Gospel, which was to form out of all nations one family in Jesus Christ.

APPLICATION.—If we follow with the eyes of faith the events which the course of ages display on the world's stage, we shall see in our own days the working of Divine Providence, which so wonderfully causes everything to carry out His eternal designs and the salvation of His elect. Let us take care not to reason about public events as the men of this world generally do; they look on them as a game or the result of chance, of prudence or imprudence on the part of statesmen. But we, better enlightened, should reason as men of faith; let us see and bless the hand of God in everything which happens, and behold Him directing the course of events toward ends often far from our thoughts. In this way we shall please God, edify others, and do good to ourselves. We shall grow in faith, hope, and love of God.

COLLOQUY with the Apostle St. Thomas, whose Feast we celebrate this day. Beg of him to obtain for us a share in the lively sentiments of faith and love which animated him at the moment when, placing his hand in the wound of our Lord's side, he exclaimed, "Dominus meus, et Deus meus!" "My Lord and my God!" (St. John 20: 28.)

BENEFITS WHICH WE OWE TO THE WORD INCARNATE

1st Prel. Behold the infant Jesus weeping for us in the manger of Bethlehem.

2d Prel. Beg the grace of appreciating the principal benefits which we owe to His immense love.

POINT I

BENEFIT OF EXISTENCE

CONSIDERATION.— St. John begins his Gospel with these sublime words, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was made nothing that was made. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.” (St. John 1: 1, 3, 14.) It is, then, by this eternal Word, who in time united Himself to our mortal nature, that this universe has been created out of nothing; and as nothing which it contains was made without Him, we have been also made by Him, and to Him we owe the blessing of existence in time and eternity, the one being inseparable from the other.

APPLICATION.— During this time, when we are preparing ourselves to celebrate worthily the anniversary of the human birth of the Eternal Word, it is natural we should think of our own birth, and of Him to whom we owe it. And with what a burst of love and gratitude we ought to think of it, who have received the plenitude of the gifts of life, being born by a special providence *after* the Incarnation of the Son of God. Do we think of this often enough, with enough affection and gratitude?

AFFECTIONS.— Express your love and gratitude. Offer yourself unreservedly to God.

RESOLUTIONS.— When reciting the prayers of the Novena, think of Him to whom you owe your life, and pay Him homage for it.

POINT II

BENEFIT OF REDEMPTION

CONSIDERATION.— Another blessing that we owe to the Incarnate Word is that of Redemption — that act of unspeakable love by which He willed to take on Him the sentence of death pronounced against our first parents, to expiate in His own person the sin imputed to us all, and to wash away in His blood the stains of our own iniquities. “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law,” (Gal. 3: 13,) “and washed us from our sins in His own blood.” (Apoc. 1: 5.) This second benefit is greater than the first of creation in this sense, that, as St. Augustine says, “*Quid nasci profuit, nisi redimi profuisset.*” “It would have availed us nothing to have been born, if we had not been redeemed.” In this sense also, that the benefit of redemption is a greater proof of the love of the Divine Word. Creation cost Him only a word; redemption cost Him the shedding of His blood.

APPLICATION.— It was in the stable of Bethlehem that the “Word made flesh” began the work of our redemption, offering His first tears to Divine Justice, and offering Himself as a victim of expiation. What should this wonderful mystery of love produce in those who meditate on it? “*Ut et qui vivunt, iam non sibi vivant, sed ei, qui pro ipsis mortuus est et resurrexit.*” “They also who live,” says the Apostle, thus redeemed from death, “may not now live to themselves, but unto Him who died for them and rose again.” (II. Cor. 5: 15.) Consider, then, how un-

grateful and guilty you are in thinking of yourself before all things; in seeking after your comfort and honor rather than the good pleasure of your Saviour; and is not this what you have very often done?

AFFECTIONS.—"When shall I die to myself, O Jesus! to live only for Thee?" Often repeat this aspiration from a heart inflamed with divine love.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will endeavor to die daily more and more to myself through constant mortification.

POINT III

BENEFIT OF THE DIVINE ADOPTION

CONSIDERATION.—It was not enough for the love of the Incarnate Word to rescue us from slavery, and reconcile us with His Heavenly Father; He also willed that we should become His adopted children and heirs. This benefit of the divine adoption, which surpasses all that we can imagine, He accomplished by uniting in His person the human and divine natures. "When the fulness of time was come," says the Apostle, "God sent His Son . . . that we might receive the adoption of sons," (Gal. 4: 4, 5;) . . . "and if sons, heirs also; heirs, indeed, of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." (Romans 8: 17.)

APPLICATION.—How noble would be our thoughts, how holy would be our lives, if the memory of these things were always before our minds! Let us strive to make it so.

COLLOQUY with Jesus, our Redeemer and Divine Saviour.

ON THOSE QUALITIES OF THE INFANT JESUS

PROPOSED FOR OUR IMITATION

- 1st Prel.* Listen to Jesus Christ saying, "Unless you be converted and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." (St. Matt. 18: 3.)
- 2d Prel.* Beg the grace of understanding how we can become by grace what little children are by nature.

POINT I

THE NATURAL PURITY OF INFANCY

CONSIDERATION.— When we think of the mystery of Christmas — of the Word "made flesh" become "a little child for us" — we should look on this child as like other infants, endowed with the same *naturally* good qualities; but as the Infant Jesus had the full use of His reason, we should consider these qualities in Him as *supernaturally* good, raised to the dignity and merit of virtues, and we should try to retrace them in ourselves. The first of these qualities is purity, freedom from the least stain of actual sin, of which infancy is incapable. In the Infant Jesus this purity was a virtue, not only because He was sanctity itself, but because He detested sin above all things. He offered His tears for the expiation of the world, and to obtain the necessary grace to preserve us from sin.

APPLICATION.— If we desire to please the Infant Jesus, and to obtain a large share of His favor, let us try to become by virtue what He was by essence, and what little children are by nature, exempt from sin; let us strengthen ourselves, especially during this Novena, in the determination of losing everything and suffering every thing rather than commit a deliberate venial sin.

Let us keep in this disposition from love, rather than fear or any other less perfect motive.

AFFECTIONS.—“*Cor mundum crea in me, Deus. Amplius lava me ab iniquitate mea.*” “Create a clean heart within me, O God. Wash me yet more from my iniquity.” (Psalm 50: 12, 4.)

RESOLUTIONS.—To resume with renewed energy all those devotions and practices which may save you from falling into habitual faults.

POINT II

THE NATURAL HUMILITY OF INFANCY

CONSIDERATION.—Humility, or rather freedom from all thoughts of vanity, is another characteristic of infancy. But this humility has no merit, because the child is incapable of appreciating the dignity of man, and of feeling the humiliations he has to endure. It was not thus with the Infant Jesus. He perfectly knew and appreciated the dignity of His Person, the respect and sovereign homage which were due to Him. On the other hand, He felt vividly the extreme humiliations He had to endure, the loneliness in which He was left, the disdain and contempt of the world. But He did not complain, took no vengeance, accepted all and bore it all of His own choice, out of zeal for the glory of His Heavenly Father, so terribly outraged by our pride and rebellion.

APPLICATION.—It is by accepting from supernatural motives humiliations of all kinds that we shall become like little children, and pleasing to the Incarnate Word, the Infant Jesus. Let us strengthen our generous resolution of striving to attain the third degree of humility.

AFFECTIONS.—Beg of the Incarnate Word, hum-

bling Himself to become a little child, that He would grant you grace to increase in humility, to become little, and, as it were, nothing in your own eyes.

POINT III

NATURAL OBEDIENCE OF INFANCY

CONSIDERATION.—Little children are naturally obedient; incapable of making a reasonable opposition, they give themselves up. They do not examine, or criticize, or murmur, but their obedience is not meritorious. Not so with the Incarnate Word, become a little child for us. He had a perfect use of reason; He was infinite wisdom; He saw and felt all the imperfections in the orders given to Him; but He did not show it even by the least gesture. He submitted to all and in all with a perfect conformity of judgment and will.

APPLICATION.—Happy are the religious who have striven, and by virtue have become as obedient as children are by nature. Let us try to be among this happy number.

COLLOQUY with the most Holy Virgin, witness of the profound humiliation of the "Word made Flesh," becoming a little child through love of us, in order to help us to comprehend and practise the precept which He gives us later, "Unless you become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." (St. Matt. 18: 3.).

CHRISTMAS EVE:

WHAT OUR THOUGHTS, FEELINGS AND OCCUPATIONS
TO-DAY OUGHT TO BE

1st Prel. Imagine you hear the chant of those words of to-day's office, "To-day you shall know that the Lord will come, and to-morrow you shall see His glory."

2d Prel. Beg of God that all our thoughts, feelings, and actions may prepare us for the great feast of to-morrow.

POINT I

WHAT OUR THOUGHTS TO-DAY SHOULD BE

CONSIDERATION.— Man is essentially a thinking being. Our mind is always acting, and we are always thinking of something. But often we take no account of our thoughts; they are not actually good or bad, but vague. Let us try to prevent this to-day, and fix them on the great event whose joyous anniversary we are about to keep.

APPLICATION.— Let us think to-day, specially during the Mass, of the confession we are going to make, and try to obtain perfect contrition; let us think frequently, during our work, of the things that were done on this day — of the journey made by Mary and Joseph from Nazareth to Bethlehem; let us accompany them in spirit during that three days' travel; let us share in some sense their fatigue and difficulties; from time to time let us look at our Lady, and admire the calm serenity with which she endures all the various accidents, and even the affronts, which she receives at Bethlehem, where they refuse her hospitality. Jesus, whom she bore within her, made up for all. These thoughts will keep us in recollection, and in those holy dispositions which the Church desires to communicate to us to-day.

AFFECTIONS.— Adore the designs of Providence manifested in the decree of Augustus, in the journey of Mary which it necessitated, and in the refusal of hospitality at Bethlehem.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will watch to-day over my thoughts, in order to keep them fixed on the mysteries of to-morrow's festival.

POINT II

WHAT OUR FEELINGS OUGHT TO BE

CONSIDERATION.— The heart experiences all kinds of impressions. We can not always control them as we wish, but we can by efforts of our will induce certain feelings or affections.

APPLICATION.— Let us make use of this dominion of our will, and entertain during this day the feelings which are fitting, as Christmas night draws near; feelings of admiration at the thought of a God made man — a little infant — for us; feelings of desire to have Him spiritually born in our hearts; feelings of fear lest we should not give Him worthy hospitality; feelings, on the other hand, of confidence in His infinite goodness, hoping to share largely in His gifts.

AFFECTIONS.— Devote some of the time of meditation to the expression of these sentiments.

RESOLUTIONS.— To banish all sentiments of distrust and pusillanimity.

POINT III

WHAT OUR OCCUPATIONS OUGHT TO BE

CONSIDERATION.— Our occupations are nearly all arranged beforehand, and fill up the day. Our kind of life is laborious, and we have but few free moments.

In this sense all our days are alike. It is to be wished, however, that this day might be an exception, that we might live as contemplatives, entirely devoted to meditation on those great events we are about to celebrate. Unfortunately, it is just the contrary; the eves of great feasts are days of great labor. We shall all be to-day in one way or another busier than usual.

APPLICATION.— Let us make this apparent obstacle into a means of preparation for the feast; let us accept the increase of work and fatigue with a good heart, in the spirit of penance and expiation. Such is the spirit of the Church in making this day a fast. While we are laboring, let us entertain tender and pious affections for our Lady, who had to bear such hard trials to-day, especially when she was refused at Bethlehem, and obliged to bring her Divine Son into the world in a stable open to the air, in the middle of the night. Thus, while we all go about our numerous occupations, we shall unite contemplation to action, and we shall prepare an acceptable hospitality for the Infant Jesus in our hearts.

COLLOQUY with St. Joseph, who shared the griefs and joys of Mary.

CONTEMPLATION OF THE INFANT JESUS

LYING IN THE MANGER OF BETHLEHEM

1st Prel. Behold the manger of Bethlehem.

2d Prel. Beg the grace of sharing the feelings which Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds experienced at the sight of the Infant Jesus.

POINT I

CONTEMPLATION OF THE INFANT JESUS, SO SWEET AND LOVING

CONSIDERATION.—"Christus natus est nobis; venite, adoremus." "Jesus is born for us; come, let us adore Him!" Such is the invitation which the Church on this night gives to all the faithful. Respond quickly to it, O my soul! Go in spirit to Bethlehem, and contemplate the features of our Saviour. What a sight of unspeakable love meets our eyes! God, Creator of the world, become a little infant, stripped of all the splendor of His divinity, that He might take away all fear from us and draw all hearts to Him. What love thus to annihilate Himself for us; and how He loves us! See how He stretches out His little hands toward you, saying in His heart those words which He afterward repeated, "Come to Me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you." (St. Matt. 11:28.) "I came not to judge the world, but to save the world." (St. John 12:47.)

APPLICATION.—Who can contemplate this Divine Child, whose love has made Him come down from heaven into the stable, that He may raise us to heaven, and not love Him in return? Who can hear the language of His loving and compassionate heart, and not be filled with feelings of the sweetest and most entire

confidence, whatever may have been his past unfaithfulness?

AFFECTIONS.—Declare your love, devotion, and confidence. Desire that your love for Jesus may be, like His for you, free from all self-interest.

RESOLUTIONS.—To keep yourself, during the day, in these pious dispositions, having always before you the image of Jesus weeping for love of you in the stable of Bethlehem.

POINT II

CONTEMPLATION OF THE INFANT JESUS, SO POOR AND SUFFERING

CONSIDERATION.—“Propter vos egenus factus est, cum esset dives.” Jesus, says the Apostle, “being rich” with all the treasures of the world, “became poor for your sakes,” (II. Cor. 8:9;) poor unto extreme indigence, suffering cruelly from the want of many necessities of life. Contemplate, O my soul! the place of His birth, and all that is around it. What do you see? An abandoned stable, open to the wind; a manger, and in it a little straw. Such is the cradle of the new-born child, Jesus our Saviour. What poverty and what suffering! Thus, then, from His entrance into the world He fulfilled the prophecy of Isaias, “virum dolorum,” “a man of sorrows.” (Isaias 53:3.)

APPLICATION.—Jesus endured the effects of extreme poverty without complaining. He embraced them by choice, and from love; and why? To teach us to despise the possessions and delights of life, which are the greatest obstacles to salvation, and also that He might induce us to follow His example by embracing poverty and mortification, which will surely

lead us to the possessions and unspeakable delights of heaven.

AFFECTIONS.—Thank our Lord who has manifested to you the treasure concealed in poverty and suffering, and who has conferred on you the grace granted to so few, of being led to love them through your religious profession.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will make many aspirations during the day to the Infant Jesus, poor and suffering for me in the stable of Bethlehem.

POINT III

CONTEMPLATION OF THE INFANT JESUS, SO HUMBLE AND GENTLE

CONSIDERATION.—“Discite a me, quia mitis sum et humilis corde.” “Learn of Me,” from this state of voluntary abasement and loneliness to which I am reduced without a sign of impatience; “for I am meek and humble of heart.” (St. Matt. 11: 29.) What a mystery! what a depth of abasement! The Omnipotent, the Infinite Wisdom is nothing more in the eyes and estimation of men than a little infant — a type of weakness and ignorance — despised by the world, laid on a little hay in a cave, between two animals, as if He were unworthy of having a place among the children of men.

APPLICATION.—Behold, O my soul! to what an excess of humiliation a God made man has reduced Himself, to teach thee to humble thyself, and bear patiently wounding remarks and contempt, no matter from whence it comes. What gratitude ought thou to show Him!

COLLOQUY with the Infant Jesus in the crib at Bethlehem.

FEAST OF ST. STEPHEN, FIRST MARTYR *

1st Prel. Behold the saint ready to die, lifting his eyes toward heaven and praying for those who stone him.

2d Prel. Beg the grace of sharing the lively faith, the strength of soul, and the heroic charity of the holy martyr.

POINT I

LIVELY FAITH OF ST. STEPHEN

CONSIDERATION.— Stephen shared the prejudices of his nation concerning the temporal greatness of the Messiah. But the preaching of Jesus dispelled these ideas, and from henceforth he attached himself to our Lord, and became His faithful disciple. It is believed that he was of the number of the seventy-two. Later on, he was elected and ordained deacon, having received the gift of eminent faith with the fullness of the Holy Ghost. “*Virum plenum fide et Spiritu Sancto.*” He preached with fervor, and worked wonderful miracles, which were followed by numerous conversions. As St. Luke says, “*Plenus gratia et fortitudine faciebat prodigia et signa magna in populo.*” “Full of grace and fortitude, did great wonders and signs among the people.” (Acts 6:8.)

APPLICATION.— We have had the grace of getting rid of the false ideas of the world about grandeur and the happiness of having great possessions, we have had the grace of following the precepts of Jesus Christ and preferring voluntary poverty in the religious state. This is one of the most precious gifts of faith; but has this faith been fruitful in works of zeal and sanctity, as was that of St. Stephen?

AFFECTIONS.— Thank the Infant Jesus who teaches you by His example to despise the pomp of the world,

* The saint suffered martyrdom toward the end of the year in which Jesus Christ was crucified.

to embrace voluntary poverty, and to aspire only to the possessions of your heavenly home.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will endeavor to increase in esteem and love for that poverty which the Infant Jesus chose and adopted for love of me.

POINT II

COURAGE OF ST. STEPHEN

CONSIDERATION.—The success of the holy deacon's preaching soon raised a persecution against him. The doctors and princes of the nation dragged him before the *Sanhedrim* or highest court of the Jews, and false witnesses accused him as a blasphemer. Stephen knew instantly that he must either conceal the truth or risk his life in its defense. He did not hesitate, and courageously proved before his judges the divinity of Jesus Christ, and reproached them for having put the Messiah to death and obstinately resisted the Holy Spirit; and then, enlightened by a heavenly vision, he cried out, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God." (Acts 7: 55.) At these words his enemies could bear it no longer; they ran on him, and dragged him out of the city to stone him. The saint did not resist, but endured death joyfully in testimony of his faith, receiving thus the first martyr's palm toward the end of the year in which Jesus Christ died.

APPLICATION.—Martyrdom, probably, will never be our lot; but let us take comfort, for the doctors of the Church maintain and prove that the total immolation a man makes of himself by the religious profession is indeed a true martyrdom, "less terrible in its sufferings," says St. Bernard, "but more painful because of its duration." "*Horrore quidem mitius, sed diuturnitate.*" (Serm. 3. Cant.) This is true, but

it applies to a fervent and mortified religious. We can be such, but are we?

AFFECTIONS.— Ask of the Infant Jesus the spirit of fervor, and the courage and strength necessary to sustain you in the trials which you may have to undergo.

RESOLUTIONS.— At times of trial I will animate my courage by reflecting on the sufferings of Jesus, and on those of the martyrs.

POINT III

ST. STEPHEN'S HEROIC CHARITY

CONSIDERATION.— Exhausted from loss of blood, and on the point of death, the saint forgot himself. After the example of his Divine Master, he begged pardon for his murderers; "*Clamavit voce magna, dicens, Domine, ne statuas illis hoc peccatum; et cum hoc dixisset, obdormivit in Domino.*" "He cried with a loud voice, saying, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge; and when he had said this, he fell asleep in the Lord." (Acts 7: 59.)

APPLICATION.— Thus did the first martyr fulfill the precept Jesus Christ has given to us all: "Do good to them that hate you; and pray for them that persecute you." (St. Matt. 5: 44.) How do you fulfill this on occasions of far less importance, where the victory over self is infinitely easier?

COLLOQUY at the feet of Jesus. Adore and bless Him as the Source of all grace, to whom is due the glory of the first martyr's triumph. Beg of Him grace to labor and suffer for the honor of His Name.

JESUS ANNOUNCED

TO THE SHEPHERDS, AND GLORIFIED BY THE ANGELS

1st Prel. Behold the shepherds listening to the words and song of the angels.

ad Prel. Beg the grace of experiencing the feelings which the angels imparted to the hearts of the shepherds.

POINT I

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE MESSIAH

CONSIDERATION.— For the world's salvation Jesus was born at Bethlehem, and He wished that men should know it, but not the rich, proud, and sensual men of the world, only poor shepherds, simple, laborious, and unworldly. "And there were in the same country shepherds watching and keeping the night watches over their flocks; and behold an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the brightness of God shone round them, and they feared with a great fear. And the angel said to them, Fear not; for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people: for this day is born to you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David." (St. Luke 2:8-11.)

APPLICATION.— Our vocation makes us like these happy shepherds; like them, we live out of the world, a simple, chaste, poor, and very laborious life. We may, then, hope that Jesus will make Himself known to us also, that He will deign to let the brightness of His light shine round about us, and give us tidings of great joy. That we may more surely obtain these favors, let us watch over our senses and the movements of our hearts.

AFFECTIONS.—Congratulate the shepherds, rejoicing at the similarity between their position and ours. Ask for a large share in the favors of the Child Jesus.

RESOLUTIONS.—To exercise increased vigilance over ourselves.

POINT II

DISTINCTIVE SIGNS OF THE MESSIAH

CONSIDERATION.—“This day is born to you a Saviour,” said the angel; “and this shall be a sign unto you—you shall find the infant wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger.” (St. Luke 2: 11, 12.) The infancy of Jesus, a sign of humility; the swaddling clothes, a sign of poverty; the manger, or the roughness of the cradle, a sign of mortification. Such is the threefold sign which the angel gave to the shepherds and to us all, as a proof that Jesus was really the promised Saviour of the world; and, in fact, as our Saviour He had to expiate our sins, which all proceed from three sources—pride, avarice, and sensuality. He had also to show and encourage us by His example more than by His words, how to adopt the only means which will succeed in keeping us from sin. He was doing both when He came into the world with the tokens of humility, poverty, and mortification.

APPLICATION.—We have often read or listened to the Gospel we have meditated on to-day without understanding its meaning, without seeing the wonderful conformity of the signs given by the angel with the qualities of the promised Saviour. Let us conclude from this that in meditation we should make a great point of the Considerations, and study them deeply. From the light which comes into our minds should spring the affections of our hearts.

AFFECTIONS.— Beg of the Child Jesus to enlighten your understanding, and inflame your heart with His love.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will endeavor to please the Infant Jesus by strengthening within me the spirit of humility, poverty, and mortification.

POINT III

GLORIFICATION OF THE MESSIAH

CONSIDERATIONS.— One angel, supposed to be the Archangel Gabriel, was sent to announce the birth of Jesus; but when it pleased God to glorify His Son, He sent legions of angels. “And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will.” (St. Luke 2: 13, 14.)

APPLICATION.— By His deep humiliation Jesus merited this burst of praise. He had repaired the glory of God, and brought peace and joy to men of good will. These holy and encouraging thoughts ought not to be lost upon us, but should strengthen a good will in us, that energetic will ready to die to self, to seek in all things nothing but the greater glory of God; and we shall find peace of soul, and be glorified in our turn.

COLLOQUY.— Unite with the angels in honoring and adoring the Divine Infant, who, having taken on Himself the sins of the world, begins to expiate them by His tears from the moment of His birth, whilst awaiting the time to expiate them by His blood and His death on the cross. Offer yourself unreservedly and irrevocably to Him.

THE SHEPHERDS GOING TO BETHLEHEM

1st Prel. Behold the shepherds hastening to Bethlehem.

2d Prel. Beg for the feelings which filled the shepherds' hearts when they saw the Infant Jesus.

POINT I

THE SHEPHERDS EXHORT EACH OTHER TO GO TO BETHLEHEM

CONSIDERATION.—"After the angels departed from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us go over to Bethlehem, and let us see this word that is come to pass, which the Lord hath shewed to us." (St. Luke 2:15.) It would seem from this passage, that after the celestial vision disappeared, the shepherds began to doubt. The event of which they had been told was so extraordinary—the Messiah born in such abjection! so unlike the idea of that temporal greatness which they had formed about Him. Many of them hesitated about going to the spot pointed out. And then they had their flocks to keep, and to walk nearly two miles in the midst of the night. But the more fervent prevailed over the others, and at last they all set out without delay.

APPLICATION.—Happy is the religious community where there is a unity of desires and efforts to attain perfection, when each member animates and encourages the others in doing well; when there is no other ambition than that of excelling in respect, humility, and charity. Does it not depend on you to make the community in which you live like this?

AFFECTIONS.—Thank God, who has given you fervent and exemplary brethren. Ask grace to resemble them.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will sometimes ask myself if I am a cause of edification to my brethren. I will endeavor to become so, always and in all things.

POINT II

THE SHEPHERDS GO TO BETHLEHEM WITH EAGERNESS

CONSIDERATION.— When the shepherds had determined on going, they set out at once, walked quickly in spite of the darkness and fatigue of their vigil. The Gospel tells us “*Et venerunt festinantes*,” “they came with haste.” (St. Luke 2: 16.) Why did they have such promptitude of will and action? 1st. The angel’s words had given them a lively faith. 2dly. They ardently desired to see and adore the Messiah and Saviour. 3dly. They hoped to receive blessings and favors.

APPLICATION.— Every day when you awake, your good angel invites you to come to the cradle of your loving Saviour, to come and visit Him in the Sacrament of His love, and to consecrate the first-fruits of the day to Him. Oh! what graces and blessings belong to this first visit to the Blessed Sacrament. Convinced of this truth from the beginning of your novitiate, you made the resolution of never missing it by your own fault. Are you faithful to this resolve? Do you break it sometimes, perhaps frequently, and why? Because you do not rise with promptitude and eagerness, because you reason and dispute with sleep and sensuality; and thus time passes away, the propitious moment is lost.

AFFECTIONS.— Ask pardon for your past negligence and pusillanimity.

RESOLUTIONS.— To imitate the zeal of the shepherds by always being one of the first at the visit to the Holy Sacrament, customary before Meditation.

POINT III

THE SHEPHERDS FIND AND ADORE THEIR SAVIOUR

CONSIDERATION.—The shepherds having reached the place pointed out by the angel, “found Mary and Joseph, and the Infant lying in the manger.” (St. Luke 2: 16.) With their bodily eyes they only saw an ordinary infant; but with the eyes of faith they saw under that veil of feebleness the infinite majesty and goodness of God their Saviour. What joy they felt before the Divine Child, and what special graces they carried away with them!

APPLICATION.—We have the same God on our altars, veiled under still greater feebleness. Let us visit Him, then, often, animated with the same faith and feelings as the shepherds had. Here we can truly say that all depends on faith. Let us try to revive and strengthen it in us as we go toward the sanctuary, by representing Jesus to ourselves in a visible form; for instance, in the first visit we pay in the morning, as a loving child calling us to Him, and holding out His little hands full of heavenly gifts.

COLLOQUY.—Unite with the shepherds in adoring Jesus, or with the holy Innocents, who are this day honored as martyrs, in memory of their being put to death through hatred of our Lord.

RETURN OF THE SHEPHERDS, AND THEIR ZEAL

1st Prel. Behold the shepherds speaking with transport of the Messiah to those whom they meet on their road.

2d Prel. Beg the grace always to leave the presence of Jesus with the same feelings as the shepherds did.

POINT I

THE SHEPHERDS SPREAD THE GOOD NEWS EVERYWHERE

CONSIDERATION.—The shepherds, having adored their Saviour, and laid their simple offerings at His feet, “returned glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.” (St. Luke 2:20.) Such was the effect of that Divine love which the shepherds had acquired at the manger. Jesus was in their hearts and on their lips. They wanted to make Him known and loved by all the world; they spoke of Him with transport to all those whom they met, entreating them also to go and adore their Messiah. Love had changed them into Apostles.

APPLICATION.—If Jesus is in our hearts, He will also be often on our lips. He has told us “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” (St. Matt. 12:34.) Animated by His love, and with zeal for His glory, we will try to make Him loved and served as much as we can by all the world. We shall be watchful and ingenious in seizing on every occasion of attaining this great end; and these occasions will not fail us. You will know by these signs if Jesus is in your heart. Examine yourself.

AFFECTIONS.—Beg of Jesus to come into your heart, and to enkindle therein the fire of His love, as He inflamed the hearts of the shepherds.

RESOLUTIONS.— To endeavor that our meditations may be devout and our conversations religious.

POINT II

MEN ARE INDIFFERENT TO THE NEWS

CONSIDERATION.— “And all that heard wondered.” (St. Luke 2: 18.) And certainly what the shepherds told was enough to astonish the Jews of Bethlehem — the Messiah born in a stable, the appearance, words, and songs of angels! We should have thought that they would have run to the stable to adore their Saviour, and disputed who should have the honor of lodging Him, of having Him with them. But they did nothing; they wondered and reasoned, and then became indifferent, and forgot Him.

APPLICATION.— What will it serve us if, after having meditated with feelings of admiration on the wonderful mysteries of the Incarnation and birth of the Eternal Word, we do not practise the virtues of which Jesus gave us the example?

AFFECTIONS.— Go in spirit to the stable. Adore your Saviour there. Praise and bless Him. Endeavor to atone to Him for the indifference and forgetfulness of men.

RESOLUTIONS.— Strive to render your meditations not only devout, but practical.

POINT III

MARY KEEPS THE MEMORY OF THESE THINGS IN
HER HEART

CONSIDERATION.—“But Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart.” (St. Luke 2:19.) The conduct of our Lady is a singular contrast from that of the Jews. She kept all these things; she impressed deeply in her mind all that was said and done concerning her Divine Son. She meditated on them all day, and laid up a treasure of precious teaching to be communicated later on to the disciples and Apostles. It is believed that it was from her that St. Luke learnt the details he wrote in his Gospel about the Incarnation, adoration of the shepherds, the visitation, and purification.

APPLICATION.—Our dear Mother teaches us how we ought to profit by our meditations, recalling to our mind from time to time during the day the good thoughts we have had, and trying to revive in our hearts the affections which proceeded from them. See in this matter how you have failed, and what you ought to correct.

COLLOQUY with St. Thomas of Canterbury, the illustrious Martyr honored on this day. Beg of him to obtain for you a share in the ardent love which he bore to the Church of Christ, “For which,” he exclaimed on seeing his executioners, “I am willing to die.” (A. D. 1170.)

ON THE FERVOR

WHICH THE LOVE OF JESUS DEMANDS FROM US

1st Prel. Behold the Apostle saying to us, Be ye thankful, "in spirit fervent, serving the Lord." (Romans 12: 11.)

2d Prel. Beg earnestly for a spirit of fervor in God's service.

POINT I

MOTIVES FOR FERVOR AS REGARDS GOD

CONSIDERATION.—The meditations we have been making on the Incarnation and Nativity of the Eternal Word have reminded us of the unspeakable love which God has for men — for each of us. Love demands love. And the Apostle says that it ought to manifest itself especially by our fervor in the service of God. Let us end this long series of Meditations by some thoughts which will maintain and increase our fervor. The first is the benefit of creation, which supposes God to have decreed an *eternal* love for us; and we have only a little time in which to love Him meritoriously.

APPLICATION.—This thought was continually in the minds of the saints; it preserved their fervor and stimulated them to acts of virtue more and more perfect. "What!" said they; "God has lovingly been occupied with me for all eternity; I have only a little time in which I can make Him a return for it; and by my lukewarmness in His holy service shall I lose part of this brief time, shall I share my heart between Him and creatures? No, it shall never be! Courage, my soul; redouble thy fervor and generosity as thou drawest near to the end."

AFFECTIONS.—"O anima mea, ama amorem ab eterno te amantem." "O my soul! love that love

which has loved thee from all eternity." (Ven. Alvarez.)

RESOLUTIONS.— I will strive to familiarize myself with this pious aspiration.

POINT II

MOTIVES OF FERVOR AS REGARDS OURSELVES

CONSIDERATION.— If the love and service of God require fervor, a true love of ourselves does so also. Why have we left the world and entered religion, at the price perhaps of heroic sacrifices? Was it that we might lead an ordinary course of life, such as we could have done by remaining in the world? No, certainly not. It was to do penance for past sins, to have our purgatory in this life, to live and die as saints, to attain a high degree of glory in heaven. And all this is impossible without great fervor in God's service. All religious who have the attainment of the great end for which they entered religion at heart should especially dread degenerating little by little from their first fervor, and falling into lukewarmness.

APPLICATION.— "Have I persevered in my first fervor, or is it decayed?" It is natural to ask this important question at the end of a year; it is not difficult to answer it. You have but to review the time of your novitiate, to compare your way of acting then with what you now do in various points, such as rising, visits to the Blessed Sacrament, corporal penances, the additions of meditation, particular examen, etc. Make this comparison; be your own judge.

AFFECTIONS.— "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation; and strengthen me with a perfect spirit." (Psalm 50: 14.)

RESOLUTIONS.— Ask yourself often, "Why have I entered religion?"

POINT III

MOTIVES OF FERVOR AS REGARDS OTHERS

CONSIDERATION.—A religious, no matter to what order he belongs, ought to devote himself to others, and try to help them. He should come between an offended God and guilty men, that he may keep back the punishments which they have deserved. He must, then, be closely united to God by ardent love, and be dear to the heart of God, and then he will have influence with Him, and a great power of intercession. And this, again, supposes more than an ordinary generosity and fervor.

APPLICATION.—You desire ardently to do great good among souls and to save many. The great means of succeeding is to sanctify yourself with the hope of doing service to others. “*Et pro eis ego sanctifico meipsum; ut sint et ipse sanctificati*” “For them do I sanctify Myself,” said Jesus, speaking to His Apostles of His Father, “that they also may be sanctified.” (St. John 17: 19.) Be fervent, then, in God’s service, and you will be an apostle.

COLLOQUY with those saints whom you have most frequently invoked during the year.

ON THE LAST DAY OF THE YEAR

1st Prel. Imagine you see a merchant making up his accounts for the past year.

2d Prel. Beg the grace of really knowing your past life, that you may regulate the future.

POINT I

WHAT HAS THIS YEAR BEEN TO YOU?

CONSIDERATION.— On God's side this year has been for you an uninterrupted series of benefits in the order of nature and of grace. He has preserved your life and health in the midst of so many dangers, from which thousands of others have suffered. He has provided, like a father, for all your needs, you have been in want of nothing; and with fatherly solicitude He has watched over the interests of your soul, turned away temptations from you, under which you would have given way, and sustained you in difficult circumstances by extraordinary graces. Review every day of the year, and you will not find one in which some signal favor was not bestowed.

APPLICATION.— But what has this year been on your side? Has it been what God had the right to expect from you in return for so many benefits? Has it been a year of fervor in His holy service, of progress in His love? Has it not been marked, on the contrary, by many defects in the holocaust? by much unfaithfulness cowardice, ingratitude?

AFFECTIONS.— Thank God for the many favors which you have received from His more than paternal goodness, and ask pardon for having so badly corresponded with them.

RESOLUTIONS.—To occupy myself during Mass with these pious affections, and to spend this last day of the year with the greatest possible fervor.

POINT II

**WHAT REMAINS TO YOU OF THIS YEAR? NOTHING;
FOR IT HAS PASSED**

CONSIDERATION.—What remains on the last day of the year of the number of things that succeed each other so rapidly? There is nothing; all is passed; the suffering that it cost us to do right, and the enjoyment that we had in doing wrong. All the efforts and the sacrifices which the fervent religious made in going through his spiritual exercises, in sanctifying all his actions, in resisting his disorderly inclinations, in bringing his senses under the yoke of discipline and rule, that he might live in the exercise of a continual mortification—all is passed away. On the other hand, the lukewarm religious has nothing left of the satisfaction which he sought for in an easy and relaxed life, against his conscience, hurtful to his eternal interest, and disedifying to others. For both of these all is passed; and if the memory of it is with them to-day, it is a happy and encouraging remembrance for one, bitter and depressing for the other.

APPLICATION.—Profit by these salutary reflections. Recollect yourself, beg God to enlighten you, and see which of these two religious you resemble. If it is the first, let your heart expand with joy; but if it be the second, the memory of this year should excite bitter regret in your soul for having thought so little of the severe account that God will demand from you, and the merit you have lost.

AFFECTIONS.—According to the testimony of your conscience at this moment.

RESOLUTIONS.— To spend this day so fervently as to increase the sum of your merits for the past year.

POINT III

**WHAT REMAINS TO YOU OF THIS YEAR? ALL OF IT;
NOTHING IS PASSED**

CONSIDERATION.— If on the last day of the year we may truly say that all is passed away, we may also as truly say in another sense that nothing is passed; because in reality the fruit of our works remains, waiting for reward or punishment, and not a single thought, word, or action is excepted; God has weighed them all in the balance of His infinite justice; all will be abundantly rewarded or severely punished.

APPLICATION.— If this truth had been always before our minds, how eagerly we should have seized on every occasion of doing some good, how carefully we should have avoided the smallest faults, and how precious this year would have been before God! Let us try to secure this happiness during the year which is about to begin.

COLLOQUY with our guardian angel and holy patrons. Thank them. Beg of them to continue their good offices, and to unite with us in the last religious and solemn act of this year, the Canticle of Thanksgiving. *Te Deum.*

SERIES OF MEDITATIONS

FOR THE FIRST FRIDAY OF EACH MONTH

July

ON THE DEVOTION OF THE FIRST FRIDAY OF THE
MONTH

1st Prel. Imagine you see a pious assembly making the act of reparation before the picture of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

2d Prel. Beg the grace to understand well the end, utility, and practice of the devotion of the first Friday of the month.

POINT I

END OF THIS DEVOTION

CONSIDERATION.— The end of “ The Devotion of the First Friday ” is, first, to maintain fervor among the associates of the worship of the Sacred Heart, by renewing it in an especial way at the beginning of each month, and thus preventing this devotion from languishing and gradually being forgotten. And further, it is to enhance and increase the worship of the Sacred Heart of Jesus by devotion paid in public at fixed periods, and performed with much solemnity. Finally, it is to consecrate the first-fruits of each new month to the Adorable Heart of Jesus, and to receive new favors from Him in return.

APPLICATION.— To attain these great and important ends, we should try to have them to-day continually before our minds; from this moment we should form a strong purpose of doing carefully all that we are accustomed to do on this day in honor of the Sacred Heart. Let us try always to have before our eyes that Heart which is so great and beautiful — which contains

within it the fullness of all perfection, because it is the heart of a God, living the life of a God. This contemplation will give us great fervor, and will increase our love and our devotion toward the person of Jesus Christ, and our desire of forming ourselves upon Him as our model.

AFFECTIONS.—An ardent desire to attain the ends of this day's devotion.

RESOLUTIONS.—In order to keep my thoughts fixed on the Sacred Heart, I will often during the day make the pious aspiration, "Heart of Jesus, grant that I may love Thee daily more and more."

POINT II

UTILITY OF THIS DEVOTION

CONSIDERATION.—Besides the numerous advantages indicated in the preceding Point, the devotion of the first Friday affords the faithful occasion for many eminent acts of piety which they would not otherwise perform: confession, communion, visits to the Blessed Sacrament, or an hour of adoration, meditation on God's word, consecration and reparation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, etc. For us who are religious, besides leading us to perform similar acts of piety, it makes us think of Jesus Christ and the promises we made Him at our profession; the immense love He has testified for us; the boundless love and devotion He demands from us in return. It also makes us think of the favors of all kinds which He has promised to those who worthily honor His heart, and try to make it honored by others. Finally, in making us think of the ingratitude in which His divine heart was steeped, it excites us to redouble our fervor, and thus aids us to become better Christians and better religious.

APPLICATION.—How we ought, then, to love this

devotion, and strive to support and propagate it! It is true, all do not derive the same benefits from it, and that you yourself perhaps have not become better; but whose fault is it? Is it not your own, because the first Friday of the month has been for you a day which differed little from other days of the month? or because the little you have done in honor of the Sacred Heart has been done with indifference? Examine yourself.

AFFECTIONS.— Ask pardon for your past faults, and grace to avoid them henceforth.

RESOLUTIONS.— To neglect no means of sanctifying this day.

POINT III

PRACTICE OF THIS DEVOTION

CONSIDERATION.— In what ought the devotions of this day to consist? 1st. In doing what the faithful also perform in honor of the Sacred Heart, but with that additional piety fitting to religious. 2d. In passing this day in great recollection, thinking frequently of the love and of the sorrows of the heart of Jesus. 3d. In sanctifying this day by some acts of penance or special devotion, such as the way of the Cross. 4th. To examine in what way we can improve during the month upon what we have done the preceding month, with the view of giving greater pleasure to the Heart of our loving Saviour.

APPLICATION.— Make the resolution of being faithful to these practices, and arrange their details. Beg for grace never to omit them, from any excuse whatever.

COLLOQUY with Blessed Margaret Alacoque, to whom our Lord was pleased to reveal the motives and end of the devotion to His Sacred Heart, as well as the great advantages which the faithful would derive from this devotion.

August

THE LOVE OF THE HEART OF JESUS

MANIFESTED IN THE INSTITUTION OF THE HOLY
EUCCHARIST

1st Prel. Imagine you hear Jesus saying, "Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." (St. Matt. 28: 20.)

2d Prel. Ask for grace to understand the miracles of love which the heart of Jesus works in the Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist.

POINT I

JESUS AS THE COMPANION OF OUR EXILE IN THE
HOLY EUCCHARIST

CONSIDERATION.—The love of the Heart of Jesus has found means to perform a prodigy impossible to human love — *to die for the beloved object, yet without being separated from it.* This He did by the institution of the Holy Eucharist. By means of this ineffable Sacrament, Jesus Christ dwells really in our hearts, and in the midst of us, though veiled from our eyes. Making Himself thus the *companion of our exile*, He multiplies His presence all over the world, that no one may be deprived of it; and from the interior of the tabernacle He calls to us as from an abyss of mercy, "Come to me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you." (St. Matt. 11: 28.)

APPLICATION.—Let us to-day offer to the heart of Jesus our tribute of love, gratitude, and veneration; to make reparation for having so frequently disregarded His loving invitations, so seldom visited him in the Sacrament of His love, so often grieved His Sacred

Heart by our coldness and infidelity, though we actually live under the same roof with Him.

AFFECTIONS.— Endeavor to maintain yourself for some time in these pious dispositions.

RESOLUTIONS.— To visit Jesus Christ in the Sacrament of His love more frequently, or at least with greater fervor.

POINT II

JESUS IN THE HOLY EUCHARIST AS A VICTIM PERPETUALLY OFFERED FOR US

CONSIDERATION.— The second marvel which the love of our Divine Saviour works for us by means of the Holy Eucharist is, that He renews continually in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass the offering which He made on Calvary on Good-Friday. He is here also both priest and victim, offering Himself by the hands of His minister. The only difference between the Sacrifice of the Cross and that on our altars is, that the first was a bloody sacrifice, while the other is unbloody; Jesus being therein slain, according to the language of theology, *only by the sword of the words of consecration*, by virtue of which words His body is separated from His blood, and would really be separated, were not Jesus, in His glorious state, immortal. From this we conclude, with St. John Chrysostom, “that the Sacrifice of the Mass is of equal value with that of the Cross.” “*Tantum valet missæ sacrificium quantum mors Christi in cruce.*”

APPLICATION.— What a blessing and happiness to be able duly to participate in this Holy Sacrifice; if not as a priest, yet as a server or assistant! But how do we assist thereat? With faith, reverence, devotion, or with coldness, and out of mere custom, neglecting the acts of devotion, we were once in the habit of making?

AFFECTIONS.— On this day, when we commemorate the institution of the Holy Sacrifice of our altars, let us admire and glorify with holy transports the love therein displayed by the Heart of Jesus.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will at once put in practice all that may aid me in assisting at holy mass with devotion and profit.*

POINT III

JESUS THE FOOD OF OUR SOULS IN THE HOLY EUCHARIST

CONSIDERATION.— The love of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist is shown most of all by His vouchsafing to become therein the food of our souls, and so identifying Himself with us, that “we live in Him and He in us.” Listen to His own words: “Accipite et manducate; hoc est corpus meum.” “Take ye, and eat; this is my body.” (I. Cor. II: 24.) “Qui manducat meam carnem, et bibit meum sanguinem, in me manet, et ego in illo.” “He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me, and I in him.” (St. John 6: 56.)

APPLICATION.— How is it that after so many Communions we are still so imperfect, so *unspiritual*, so *unlike Jesus Christ*? It must be for want of the right dispositions; for want of fervor in our preparation, or thanksgiving, or even in the very reception of the Blessed Sacrament.

COLLOQUY with the angels who adore Jesus in the Sacrament of His Love.

* See Method of Hearing Mass, at beginning of volume, page x.

September

OBEDIENCE OF THE HEART OF JESUS

1st Prel. Behold Jesus Christ showing you His Heart, and saying, "I have given you an example," (of obedience,) "that as I have done to you, so you do also." (St. John 13: 15.)
2d Prel. Ask for grace to copy faithfully your Divine Model.

POINT I

SUBMISSION OF THE HEART OF JESUS TO HIS FATHER

CONSIDERATION.—Obedience is the first-fruit of humility. Jesus is *humble of heart*; therefore He is docile and obedient of heart. He tells us that He makes the will of His Heavenly Father His own. "Pater, . . . non mea voluntas, sed tua, fiat." "Father, . . . not My will, but Thine be done." (St. Luke 22: 42.) And that He submits and conforms Himself to it in everything: "I do always the things that please Him." And this even in things most repugnant to nature; witness His agony in the Garden of Gethsemani. His obedience was perfect, because the foundation on which it rested was perfect; He did the will of His Father, because it was the will of His Father: "Yea, Father, for so hath it seemed good in Thy sight."

APPLICATION.—What an excellent example is here proposed for our imitation! Have we followed it by trying to make the will of God our own? By accepting all the various circumstances of our life, whether agreeable to us or not, with *an entire submission of heart* to the will of God, without whose permission nothing can befall us in this world? Have we obeyed Him always in a spirit of faith and love? "Ita

Pater: quoniam sic fuit placitum ante te." (St. Matt. 11:26.)

AFFECTIONS.—Grant me, Lord Jesus, the grace to understand and faithfully imitate the submission and obedience of Thy Sacred Heart.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will, during this day, perform all my actions, whether trivial or important, in the spirit of obedience.

POINT II

SUBMISSION OF THE HEART OF JESUS TO MARY AND JOSEPH

CONSIDERATION.—"Erat subditus illis." "And He was subject to them." (St. Luke 2:51.) These three words contain the whole life of Jesus Christ during the thirty years that He spent in retreat with Mary His Mother, and Joseph His foster-father. But what is this? A God subject to two creatures? Is there not something in this inconsistent with the sovereign dominion of the Divinity over all creation? No; because the obedience of Jesus is really given to God His Father, who is represented to Him by Mary and Joseph.

APPLICATION.—This is the true model of obedience, the obedience of faith; submission to God in the persons of those who represent Him to us, and of whom He has said, "He that heareth you heareth Me." (St. Luke 10:16.) This is the obedience of the perfect religious, which, far from degrading, exalts and ennobles him. To obey thus, is to have the same will with God. Is it in this spirit that we obey our lawful superiors, without having regard to their personal qualifications? If so, our obedience will be perfect, like that of our Divine Master, as far as is possible for us; it will be prompt, generous, unlimited, and full of merit before God.

AFFECTIONS.— Esteem and love of the obedience which proceeds from faith. Desire to excel in the practice of this great virtue.

RESOLUTIONS.— Take care that your obedience be not based upon merely human motives, that your submission do not proceed from fear or self-interest.

POINT III

ADMIRABLE SUBMISSION OF THE HEART OF JESUS TO ALL KINDS OF PERSONS

CONSIDERATION.— On the same principle which we have been considering, Jesus obeyed and submitted to even the most wicked men, and those whose hypocrisy He had proclaimed to the people. Caiphas, in his office of high-priest, adjured Him to say if He were the Son of God or not, and immediately Jesus breaks the silence He had hitherto observed, and answers him fully. He submitted even to the heathen: Pontius Pilate, as governor of Judea, condemned Him to death, and He accepted the sentence without a word of reply. He even obeyed His executioners: when they ordered Him to stretch out His arms on the cross, He immediately did it, with perfect submission of heart and will. Thus He became, as the Apostle says, “obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross.” (Philip. 2: 8.) It was for love for us, and also for our instruction and encouragement, that Jesus gave us these examples of obedience. Bear them in mind, and you will never complain of having harsh superiors, or commands too difficult to obey. With Jesus on the cross before our eyes, no act of obedience will seem too hard for us.

COLLOQUY with any Saint of our order remarkable for obedience of heart and spirit; or else with our Beloved Saviour, thanking Him for the example and encouragement He has given us, and asking pardon for the many reservations and imperfections which generally accompany our obedience.

October

OUR DUTIES TOWARD THE HEART OF JESUS DWELLING
IN OUR TABERNACLE

1st Prel. Behold Jesus shewing you from the Tabernacle His Heart, inflamed with love, and saying, "My son, give Me thy heart." (Proverbs 23:26.)

2d Prel. Ask Him with great fervor to kindle the fire of His love in your heart.

POINT I

WHAT DOES THE HEART OF JESUS DO FOR MEN IN
THE BLESSED SACRAMENT?

CONSIDERATION.— It performs there the office of a *mediator*, continually interceding for us. If God does not utterly exterminate the human race on account of sins which cry for vengeance to heaven, we know that it is because the Heart of Jesus is perpetually pleading with Him, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." (St. Luke 23:34.) It performs the office of a *priest*, sacrificing itself every day for us on a thousand altars. It performs the office of a *father*, feeding us with its own flesh and blood. It performs the office of a *master* and *teacher*, instructing us, by its very condition in the Blessed Sacrament, in the virtues most necessary for us — silence, recollection, humility, contempt of the world, patience, resignation, devotion.

APPLICATION.— These are but a few of the claims which the Heart of Jesus has upon our love. We know them; we understand and feel what it requires of us in return; and yet we are so cold, so dead, even before the Blessed Sacrament, even in our Communion! Whence does this proceed? Is it not from too strong an attachment to the world and to ourselves? Or

perhaps from certain affections which, if not sinful, are at least sensual, taking too strong root in our hearts.

AFFECTIONS.—O Sacred Heart of Jesus! Teach me to die wholly to myself, that I may live but for Thee and by Thee.

RESOLUTIONS.—Frequently during the day to recite this pious aspiration.

POINT II

WHAT DO MEN DO FOR THE HEART OF JESUS?

CONSIDERATION.—Not to speak of Jews and heretics, what return does Jesus receive from those who believe in His Presence in the Blessed Sacrament? From some, it is true, He receives the homage of adoration day and night, and that gratitude and filial devotion which are His due; but only from a few; and what does He receive from others? Neglect, disdain, contempt, profanation, sacrilege.

APPLICATION.—Have we nothing to reproach ourselves with on this head in the past or the present? What shall we say even now of our negligence in visiting the Sacred Heart in the Blessed Sacrament—where it is always burning with love for us—of our many distractions, our little care to make devout preparation and thanksgiving for Holy Communion? Have we not good reason to fear that our dispositions are not such as the Sacred Heart desires to see in us?

AFFECTIONS.—An ardent desire to be one of the few true friends and worshipers of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

RESOLUTIONS.—To neglect no means of securing the fulfillment of this desire.

POINT III

WHAT DOES THE HEART OF JESUS EXPECT OF US,
ESPECIALLY AT THE PRESENT TIME

CONSIDERATION.— It expects that we should make reparation to it, by extraordinary devotion and fervor, for all the contempt, injuries, and profanations of which so many Catholics are guilty; that to this end we should visit it frequently during this day; that we should receive Holy Communion and hear Mass with great devotion, and, if possible, also go to Benediction, and there, in union with the priest, make an act of reparation to the Sacred Heart; or, if we are not able to do this, that we should make it privately.

APPLICATION.— What powerful motives are there at the present day to urge us to do this with all our hearts! Which of us does not owe many blessings and graces to the Heart of Jesus? Who has not numerous sins and infidelities to make reparation for, many graces and benefits to pray for? Add to these private motives other more public ones, especially those which affect the Catholic Church, now so bitterly persecuted, and we shall never tire of finding a thousand different ways of honoring the Sacred Heart.

COLLOQUY with the Blessed Margaret Alacoque to whom Jesus deigned to reveal the secrets of His Heart.

November

MEEKNESS OF THE HEART OF JESUS

1st Prel. Behold Jesus Christ showing us His Heart, and saying "Learn of Me, because I am meek." (St. Matt. 11:29.)
2d Prel. Ask for grace to understand, esteem, and love meekness.

POINT I

MEEKNESS OF THE HEART OF JESUS MANIFESTED IN HIS WHOLE PERSON

CONSIDERATION.—Of all qualities, meekness is the most universally loved and appreciated. A gentle, kind-hearted man is no sooner known than loved. Every one feels drawn to him, and desires his friendship. What a marvelous attraction, then, must the sweet Heart of Jesus have for men! We read in the holy Gospels that as many as four thousand followed Him once for three days without having any food, so great was the charm which His gentleness and meekness shed around Him.

APPLICATION.—Do we desire to know if our meekness at all resembles that of our Divine Master? Let us judge it by its fruits. Have we the sympathy and confidence of our brethren? do they seek our company gladly, especially in times of trouble, or do they keep aloof from us, from fear of being annoyed and contradicted?

AFFECTIONS.—O most meek Heart of Jesus! teach me to be meek and humble of heart, after Thy example.

RESOLUTIONS.—To combat vigorously any inclination to hardness of heart or obstinacy of temper of which we may be conscious.

POINT II

THE MEEKNESS OF HIS WORDS

CONSIDERATION.— Every page of the holy Gospels bears witness to this. What could be more sweet than these words? “I am the good Shepherd. The good Shepherd giveth His life for His sheep.” (St. John 10: 11.) Or again, “Jerusalem, Jerusalem! . . . how often would I have gathered thy children as the bird doth her brood under her wings; and thou wouldst not.” (St. Luke 13: 34.) And again, the words He addressed to the traitor Judas in the very act of consummating his crime: “Friend, whereto art thou come? . . . Judas dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss?” (St. Matt. 26: 50; St. Luke 22: 48.) What meekness, above all, in the prayer which He made on the cross for His executioners: “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” (St. Luke 23: 34.)

APPLICATION.— If it be true that from the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks, must we not conclude that our hearts are still far from being like that of our Divine Saviour? We are so harsh in our judgments of others; so ready to exaggerate their faults, to reprove them, to publish them. Jesus answers with such meekness when unjustly accused, and we break out into sharp words when told of our real faults. Jesus finds an excuse for His executioners, and we are angry if we only imagine that some one desires to do us an injury.

AFFECTIONS.— Acknowledge and regret that you have derived so little profit from the instructions of your Divine Master, who continually repeats to us, “Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart.”

RESOLUTIONS.— I will devote particular attention,

during this day, to my words, and to the affections of my heart.

POINT III

THE MEEKNESS OF HIS ACTIONS

CONSIDERATION.—How severely was the meekness of Jesus tried! During the whole course of His life He was exposed to the hatred, calumnies, and insults of the doctors and rulers of the Jews. They even told Him to His face, before all the people, that He was possessed with a devil, and worked miracles by the power of Beelzebub, the prince of the devils. And yet His meekness never failed; it remained unchanged to the very last. He may indeed justly say to us, “Learn of Me; for I am meek and humble of heart.”

APPLICATION.—It is easy enough to be gentle and patient when all goes well with us, and every one is kind and considerate to us; there is no merit in it under such circumstances. But to be really “meek and humble of heart” is to be able to bear wrongs patiently, and to render good for evil, after the example of Jesus Christ. Let us strive earnestly to do this, that so the words of Our Blessed Lord may be applied to us, “*Beati mites; quoniam ipsi possidebunt terram.*” “Blessed are the meek; for they shall possess the land.” (St. Matt. 5:4.)

COLLOQUY with Saint Francis of Sales, so remarkable for his constant meekness, meekness the more meritorious as he was naturally of a hasty and irritable temper.

December

GENEROSITY OF THE HEART OF JESUS

1st Prel. Behold Jesus showing you His Heart, and saying, "Behold this Heart which has loved men so much."

2d Prel. Ask for a heart wholly devoted to the interests of Jesus Christ.

POINT I

THE GENEROSITY OF THE HEART OF JESUS IS SHOWN
BY THE SACRIFICE WHICH HE MADE OF
HIS REPUTATION

CONSIDERATION.— We commonly measure the generosity of a man by the greatness of the sacrifices which he makes for his fellow-creatures. We may do the same with the generosity of the Heart of Jesus. What has He not sacrificed for us? May we not say that He only shared our goods in order that He might be able to sacrifice them for us? Of all that we possess, that which we guard most jealously, and with good reason, is our honor, our reputation; and this Jesus was content to sacrifice as a reparation for the dishonor which sin had done to His Heavenly Father, and to reconcile us to Him. He not only submitted silently to the most atrocious calumnies, but He died stripped of all reputation. As He hung on the cross, His enemies dared Him to come down if He were the Son of God: "Christus descendat nunc de cruce, ut videamus et credamus." "Let Christ come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe." (St. Mark 15: 32.) But He descended not, leaving them to conclude that He had not the power, that He was an impostor, the basest of men. And thus He died.

APPLICATION.— God will probably not require of us

so entire a sacrifice of our reputation as He has demanded of certain great saints; amongst others, of St. John of the Cross, who was imprisoned, and died the victim of a calumny, without uttering one word of complaint. But what our Lord does and will ask of us, is to sacrifice all feeling of resentment when, either through malice or inadvertence, some one may have injured our reputation; to receive in silence, as our rule commands, any reprimand or penance given for a fault which we have not committed. These little sacrifices, without being heroic, will be pleasing to God, and merit a reward.

AFFECTIONS.—Pray for a generous heart capable, if necessary, of making the sacrifices most painful to nature.

RESOLUTIONS.—To be indifferent to honor and reputation, except in so far as they regard the service of God and of our neighbor.

POINT II

IT IS SHOWN BY THE SACRIFICE WHICH HE MADE
OF ALL THE ENJOYMENTS OF LIFE

CONSIDERATION.—Jesus was innocence itself; He had no sins to expiate; He therefore had a full right to enjoy all the pleasures of this life. But, nevertheless, He made a generous sacrifice of them, passing His whole life subject to the most severe privations, and sufferings both of body and soul, such as no one had ever endured. And this because He had taken upon Himself to make satisfaction to the Divine Justice for all our criminal indulgences; and also that He might encourage us by His example to lead a life of penance.

APPLICATION.—We are guilty creatures; we have much to expiate. If we have not strength or courage for severe penances, let us at least practise some little

ones in a spirit of sacrifice; let us mortify ourselves in something during the day, and suffer without complaining. This is surely little enough, and yet how seldom we do even this!

AFFECTIONS.—Praise, bless, and love the most generous Heart of Jesus.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will gladly profit of every opportunity of mortifying myself, and of making any sacrifice for the love of Jesus.

POINT III

HIS MEEKNESS MANIFESTED IN THE SACRIFICE OF HIS LIFE

CONSIDERATION.—The most generous sacrifice that one man can make for another is, according to Our Blessed Lord's own words, the sacrifice of his life—to die to save another from death. This, then, is what Jesus has done for us, for each one of us. We can all say with the Apostle, "Qui dilexit me et tradidit semetipsum pro me." "Who loved me, and delivered Himself for me." (Gal. 2:20.)

APPLICATION.—Is this great proof of the love of Jesus always present to our mind? Does it excite us to gratitude? And does this gratitude show itself in works, in a readiness to make sacrifices? Do we not, on the contrary, suffer many opportunities of making them to be lost? Our hearts are indeed most unlike the adorable Heart of Jesus.

COLLOQUY.—Prostrate before the Heart of my Beloved Saviour, I will make an act of reparation, consecrating myself henceforth forever to His service.

MEDITATIONS FOR THE MONTHLY RETREAT

July

MOTIVES AND MEANS TO MAKE A GOOD RETREAT

1st Prel. Think that you hear Jesus saying to you, "Give an account of thy stewardship." (St. Luke 16:2.)

2d Prel. Ask for grace to know whether you made a good or a bad use of last month's Retreat.

POINT I

MOTIVES FOR MAKING THIS RETREAT WELL

CONSIDERATION.—The practice of making a monthly Retreat is recommended by the Saints, and by all directors of religious houses. Our own order attaches great importance to it, and we may therefore conclude that God will bestow great and special graces on it. Moreover, it deeply concerns the dearest interests of our soul. During the month that has passed since our last Retreat we have done much for others; shall we, then, neglect ourselves? This Retreat may be our last; if we knew that it would be certainly so, with what fervor should we make it! But, in any case, God will demand a strict account of it, as of a great grace. In the order of His providence, it ought to contribute to preserve me from great evils; from the evil of forgetting the resolutions made in my last Retreat; and from the evil of growing negligent and careless in my spiritual exercises, so as no longer to derive from them necessary strength to sustain me in the spiritual combat, and, above all, in temptations against my vocation.

APPLICATION.— Consider attentively these motives for making a *good* Retreat; call to mind any defects in your former Retreats, in order to avoid them now; and ask the help of God through the intercession of the patron Saint of the month.

AFFECTIONS.— Express to God your desires, hopes, and fears.

RESOLUTIONS.— To spare no pains to secure the fruit of the Retreat. Fix now on the time that you mean to devote to it.

POINT II

MEANS OF MAKING A GOOD RETREAT

CONSIDERATION.— The first means, according to the teaching of the Holy Ghost, is the fear of not making it well, of not taking sufficient trouble about it, of doing it merely out of custom. “Initium sapientiæ timor Domini.” “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” (Psalm 110: 10.)

The second means is to fix our thoughts upon it from the evening before, and to arrange the Points of Meditation according to what is most suitable for us.*

The third is, before going to rest to excite within ourselves an ardent desire and a firm hope to reap great fruit from the Retreat; to become better, stronger, more fervent in the service of God and our neighbor.

The fourth is, to hear or to celebrate Holy Mass with great devotion, and with the intention of obtaining these benefits; to offer our Communion for this intention, and to add some penance or act of mortification.

APPLICATION.— These means are neither burdensome nor difficult, while they are most important and

* The first two Points of this Meditation are for this day only. For the five other months, see p. 578.

salutary ; let us, therefore, not hesitate to adopt them.

AFFECTIONS.—“My heart is ready, O God!”
“Teach me to do Thy will.” (Psalm 107:2;
142:10.)

RESOLUTIONS.—I will recall to mind that one of my
Retreats with which I was most satisfied, in order that
I may go through this with the same attention.

POINT III

THE WAY TO MAKE A GOOD MANIFESTATION OF CONSCIENCE

CONSIDERATION.—To attain the chief end of the
monthly Retreat—namely, to become better—we
must try to know ourselves, to see clearly where and
how we need reformation. For this purpose we
examine ourselves on the past month. In many reli-
gious communities, it is customary to give an account
of this examination to the director. Nothing can be
more useful; only, to do it with profit, we must first
prepare ourselves properly to make this manifestation
of conscience, and next, be very open and unreserved
with our director.

APPLICATION.—Observe these practical rules: 1st,
recollect yourselves in the presence of God; 2d, ask for
grace to know yourselves, and to make yourselves
known; 3d, examine the past month; 4th, make definite
resolutions; 5th, offer them to God through our
blessed Lady.

COLLOQUY with the holy patron Saint of the month.

August *

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* To render these Meditations more suitable for the monthly retreat, before preparing the Points, read over the Meditation in Vol. I., p. 515. Take from it the Preludes and Colloquy.

SERIES OF QUESTIONS

WHICH MAY AID US IN OUR REVIEW OF THE MONTH
AND OUR EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

FIRST SERIES

ON OUR RELIGIOUS DUTIES

How do I stand,

I. Relatively to God?

1. Sins? Offenses? Negligences?
2. Confidence? Generosity? Perseverance in desolations, etc.?
3. Exercise of the presence of God by the habit of ejaculatory prayer?

II. Relatively to my superiors; to obedience, to the rules?

1. Interior respect and love? Exteriorly? Speaking of them? — to them?
2. Conformity of judgment and will? Have I blamed them? Criticized, complained of them? Had aversions?
3. Am I a subject of joy or trouble to them, or of embarrassment?
4. Obedience of faith and love, or of fear or policy?
5. The common life — any singularly unreasonable exceptions?
6. Fidelity to rule, to discipline, to the established customs?

III. Relatively to others?

1. Am I charitable or severe in my judgments? Contempt? Detraction?
2. Zeal? Discretion? Prudence? Given edification in visits, journeys, etc.?

IV. Relatively to my brethren?

1. Mutual support? Union? Indulgence or harshness in words? Judgments?
2. Aversions? Envy? Detractions? Particular friendships?
3. Good example? Zeal for their advancement? The common good?

V. Relatively to the esteem and love of my vocation?

Desire of attaining its perfection? Renewed every day on rising?

VI. Relatively to my offices or employment?**How have I acquitted myself?**

1. According to obedience, the instructions received, or according to my own ideas?
2. With exactitude? In conscience before God? For supernatural motives?

VII. Relatively to myself?

1. My vows? Poverty? Obedience? Chastity? Temptations? Occasions?
2. Violent passions? Difficulty of overcoming them? Which?
3. Particular examen? On what? With what success?
4. Piety? Fidelity to particular practices? Particular devotions?
5. Humility? Mortification? Corporal penances? Self-sacrifice?
6. Guided by faith and by reason, or by caprice and circumstances?
7. Am I a fervent or a lukewarm religious?

VIII. Relatively to my inferiors — pupils, penitents, the sick?

1. Vigilance and prudence? Gentleness and firmness? Zeal and patience?
2. Good example? Seeking help from God—from their Angel-guardians?

SECOND SERIES

ON SPIRITUAL PROGRESS IN PARTICULAR

Has there been progress regarding

1. Purity of conscience? In what?
2. Facility in resisting temptations? The dominant passion?
3. In overcoming sins or faults? In acquiring virtue?
4. Humility? Self-contempt? Mortification? Regularity?
5. Facility in union with God? Uniting the interior to the exterior life?
6. Earnestness? Devotion? Fervor in spiritual exercises?

THIRD SERIES

ON SPIRITUAL EXERCISES IN PARTICULAR

Am I faithful in

1. Rising promptly and with devotedness?
2. Observing all the additions to Meditation?
3. Preparing Meditation well? Making it devout and practical.
4. Have I, before, during, and after Holy Mass, Confession, and Communion, done what was taught me, and from which I gained such fruit and consolation in the novitiate?
5. Putting in practice the means there pointed out for sanctifying all the actions of the day, even the most ordinary ones?

SOME MEDITATIONS FOR DAYS OF
COMMUNION

PREPARATION FOR HOLY COMMUNION

1st Prel. Imagine you hear Jesus Christ saying, "Take ye, and eat; this is my Body." (1. Cor. 11: 24.)

2d Prel. Beg for the principal conditions of a good Communion.

POINT I

LIVELY FAITH

CONSIDERATION.— If we desire to have great devotion in our Communions, and that they should bear much fruit, we should make a careful preparation for them. There is the distant and the immediate preparation. The first includes confession, always useful, sometimes necessary, (Conc. Trid. sess. xiii. c. vii.;) then a careful preparation of our Meditation with the thought of the Communion before us. Let our last thought at night and our first on waking be of the great act before us; to desire ardently to perform it well; to form our special intention for it, as well as that for applying the plenary indulgence which we can gain. The immediate preparation consists in animating our souls with a lively faith in the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. It all depends on our faith. Without faith we only see a bit of bread; and what devotion could we have then? But with the eyes of faith we see Jesus Christ, we see God. If, when we approach the altar, we saw Him under a sensible form, how transported with joy we should be! And a lively faith should produce the same effect on us that such a miracle as this would do.

APPLICATION.— Let us try, then, to strengthen and increase our faith, crying out with the desolate father

in the gospel, "Lord, I believe." I believe, O my Jesus! that I am about to receive Thee — Thyself, God and Man — although hidden from my eyes. I believe a thousand times more because Thou hast said it than if it had been proved by extraordinary miracles. I believe it; I am ready to seal my belief with my blood, as so many of the martyrs have done. "Credo, Domine: adjuva incredulitatem meam." "I do believe, Lord; help my unbelief." (St. Mark 9:23.)

AFFECTIONS.— Ask for this faith in earnest prayer.

RESOLUTIONS.— Read occasionally some treatise on the Holy Eucharist.

POINT II

DEEP HUMILITY

CONSIDERATION.— The man who has an ardent faith in the real presence of Jesus Christ, of a God of infinite holiness and majesty, will be penetrated with deep humility — that sound disposition of heart which is so pleasing to God; he will be firmly convinced of his own absolute and entire unworthiness. This conviction is so beautifully expressed by the Church in the words she places on the lips of him who is about to receive Communion, "Domine, non sum dignus, ut intres sub tectum meum." "Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof." (St. Matt. 8:8.)

APPLICATION.— Look into yourself, and if you consider your past life, with its many sins and its great ingratitude, and your present life, with the various stains upon your soul, the great lukewarmness, and the many deficiencies in the little you do for God, you will also cry out, with a deep conviction of the truth, "I am unworthy, O my Jesus! altogether unworthy to approach Thee, or even to look at Thee. I adore Thee; I am as nothing before Thee; but how can I draw near to Thee?"

AFFECTIONS.— Endeavor to maintain these sentiments of humility, acknowledging your spiritual miseries in the words of the pious author of the *Imitation*, (IV. Book, vii.)

RESOLUTIONS.— Place yourself before God as a servant in presence of a good Master whom he is conscious of having badly served.

POINT III

GREAT CONFIDENCE AND ARDENT DESIRES

CONSIDERATION.— “Come to Me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you.” (St. Matt. 11:28.) These words of Our Blessed Lord calm every fear of our hearts; our confidence is restored, and we see that the more weak and miserable we are, the greater is our right to go to Communion; we long for the moment when we shall receive Him who will work all this within us.

APPLICATION.— *Confidence* and *desires* are the two feelings which the Physician of our souls loves to find in the hearts of those who receive Him. Let us take care, then, to possess them, and say to Him, “O sweet and loving Saviour, Thou dost call to Thee the feeble and miserable; Thou dost invite them to sit down at Thy table; therefore I believe that I have a greater right than any one else to approach Thee, because I am more sinful, more miserable, than all others. Come, then, O my Jesus! come and cure me and enrich me. My soul sighs for Thee as the sick man longs for the coming of his physician, as the hungry beggar longs for the visit of his benefactor. Come, oh! come to me; without Thee I can not live.”

COLLOQUY with the Holy Virgin. Say to her with the Blessed Claver, “O my good Mother! communicate to my heart one spark of the love with which yours is inflamed, or rather lend me for a moment your heart, that I may receive and shelter within it Jesus your Divine Son, and my Saviour.” (Life of B. Claver.)

PIOUS PRACTICES

TO HELP US TO COMMUNICATE WITH DEVOTION

CONSIDERATION.— There is a thought which confounds, troubles, and terrifies us; it is, that we are generally so dry and cold in our Communion, never, or hardly ever, feeling the deep emotion, the holy joy, that so many pious persons experience. That we may have nothing to reproach ourselves with, or rather, that we may share the happiness of these faithful hearts, let us imitate them with simplicity in certain pious practices which their fervor has suggested to them, as the following:

I. *The evening before,*

when they are in bed, before they fall asleep, they count the hours that separate them from the moment of Holy Communion, and they say to themselves, "In about so long — in so many hours — the God of heaven and earth will be here, in my heart. I shall be enriched with God. I shall possess a happiness which the angels can not share. What an event is about to take place! Oh! would that the hour was come! Would that I could at least pass the night in prayer and in preparation!" O my good Angel and my holy Patron! do that for me which obedience will not allow me to do myself!"

II. *Waking in the morning,*

they imagine they hear what Jesus once said to Zacheus, "Make haste, and come down; for this day I must abide in thy house." (St. Luke 19: 5.) Filled with joy at these words, they answer, "O Jesus! it is too great an honor, too great a happiness. Whence is this favor done to me, so poor and so miserable? Repose, then, O my soul! thy misery is at an end; joy

and plenty shall be now thy portion. My God, grant me a heart burning with love, or at least pure from all stain of sin." Then while they wash and dress, they say, "Wash me, O Lord! Lord, wash away the smallest stains from my soul, and clothe me with the wedding robe; adorn me with virtues."

III. *The last quarter of an hour before Communion,*
they try to make with intense devotion the acts of faith, humility, confidence, and desires, as we have pointed out in the preceding Meditation. Then, with wonderful simplicity, they invite their good Angel and their holy Patron to take them by each hand and lead them to the banquet-hall, to the holy table.

IV. *At the moment of Holy Communion,*
they imagine their hearts to have become suddenly like another manger of Bethlehem, where the Divine Saviour is to be born: and prostrating themselves at the foot of the cradle — with our Lady, St. Joseph, the shepherds, the angels, and the kings — they are filled with feelings of admiration, adoration, humility, gratitude, love, joy, hope, and supplication.

V. *After Holy Communion.*

The moments which follow Communion, says St. Teresa, are the most precious ones in life to pious souls. Even if they spend half an hour in thanksgiving, it seems too short to them. And in what do their thanksgivings consist? In the affections we have enumerated — and especially in the different acts which we find in our prayer-books — in the prayers for gaining indulgences, in the renewal of our vows of religion, and the resolutions of our last retreat, and particularly in the entire and absolute offering of ourselves, of each of our senses, of each faculty of the

soul; and then add to this offering generous resolutions about the means of making a better use of Communion for the future. But the religious who is vowed to the active life *is not concentrated in himself*. He desires to spread the fire of Divine love which is burning within him throughout the whole world. He desires the cause of Jesus Christ, and the souls redeemed by His Blood, to triumph in every quarter of the globe; and he invites the angels and saints in heaven to unite themselves to him to obtain the accomplishment of the prayers of the Sovereign Pontiff, of Bishops, priests, and missionaries laboring under him in the four quarters of the globe — “*Dominus, conservet eum,*” etc. For the conversion of heathen nations — “*Confiteantur tibi, Deus, populi omnes.*” That the enemies of the Church may be humbled — “*Ut inimicos S. Ecclesiæ humiliare digneris.*” (Lit. OO. SS.) For the rooting out of schisms and heresies — “*Ut deleatur iniquitas.*” For true peace and union among Christian princes by their return to religious unity — “*Ut regibus et principibus Christianis pacem et veram concordiam donare digneris.*” (Lit. OO. SS.) For the complete triumph of the Church, etc. That these ardent prayers may be heard, he implores the powerful intercession of Mary, presenting before her the whole human race degraded by sin, wasted away by unbelief, and he implores her to save them. Then turning to Jesus, he reminds Him of the unparalleled honors which the Catholic world has given to His holy Mother since the decree of her Immaculate Conception, and he asks in return that *all* the nations (whom he numbers, if he has time) should be brought into the true Church.*

* This expansive manner of praying has this great advantage, that it raises us above our little miseries, enlarges our ideas, and dilates our hearts. For further matter, see p. 581, also the chapters of the *Imitation* suited to raise the soul and fill it with unction and devotion.

THE LAST SUPPER,

OR THE FIRST COMMUNION OF THE APOSTLES

1st Prel. Behold Jesus in the midst of His Apostles at the Last Supper.

2d Prel. Beg for redoubled faith and love.

POINT I

INSTITUTION OF THE SUPPER, OR OF HOLY COMMUNION

CONSIDERATION.— In the following words of the gospel we find the account of the great events of the institution of the Eucharist, the Priesthood, and the Holy Communion: “The Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread; and giving thanks, broke, and said, Take ye, and eat: This is My Body, which shall be delivered for you: this do for commemoration of me.” (I. Cor. 11:23, 24.) “And taking the chalice, He gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, Drink ye all of This; for This is My Blood of the new Testament, which shall be shed for many, unto remission of sins. And they all drank of It.” (St. Matt. 26:27, 28.)

APPLICATION.— When we consider this great event, which took place, as it were, before our eyes, so precise are the facts, we are especially struck by two things — the immense and unspeakable love of Jesus Christ in giving Himself as Food to men, and the no less unspeakable happiness of the Apostles, suddenly become the living tabernacles of the Divinity, and transformed into God. O my soul! a few minutes only, and the miracle of love accomplished at the Last Supper shall be renewed in thee, and thou shalt enjoy the same bliss as the Apostles; a few minutes, and Jesus Christ will be resting on my tongue, and He shall

say to me, by the mouth of the priest, "Eat; for this is My Body."

AFFECTIONS.—Acts of faith, admiration, humility, hope, and desire.

RESOLUTIONS.—Strive during the day to keep constantly before you the representation of the Last Supper.

POINT II

THE WORDS THAT PRECEDED THE INSTITUTION OF THE HOLY COMMUNION

CONSIDERATION.—As the Sacrament of the Eucharist is the mystery of mysteries, and the most wonderful of all His miracles, our Lord gradually taught His disciples to believe it. From the second year of His ministry He made it a subject of instruction. St. John tells us that He said, "Your fathers did eat manna in the desert, and are dead. I am the Living Bread which came down from heaven; the bread that I will give is My Flesh for the life of the world." Here the Evangelist interrupted his record of our Lord's words to say, "The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this Man give us His flesh to eat? Then Jesus said to them," (not to show them they had mistaken Him, but to confirm their belief that He meant a *real* presence,) "Amen, amen, I say unto you, Except you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood, you shall not have life in you. For My Flesh is meat indeed, and My Blood is drink indeed." (St. John 6: 49, 51, 54, 56.)

APPLICATION.—Let us read over and over again, and meditate on these wonderful words. We shall find in them great light and holy lessons. We shall find all that can best prepare us to communicate with great fruit.

AFFECTIONS and RESOLUTIONS the same as in the first Point.

POINT III

THE EFFECTS WHICH FOLLOWED THE INSTITUTION OF THE HOLY COMMUNION

CONSIDERATION.—According to the Holy Gospel, these effects were, 1st, on the part of our Lord, a greater tenderness for His Apostles. “Little children,” (St. John 13: 33,) (a word He had never used before,) “manete in me, et ego in vobis.” “Abide in Me, and I in you,” (St. John 15: 4;) and 2d, a greater openness of heart with them, as they themselves remarked, “Ecce nunc palam loqueris et proverbium nulum dicis.” “Behold, now Thou speakest plainly, and speakest no proverb.” (St. John 16: 29;) on the part of the Apostles, a greater purity of heart, “Jam vos mundi estis.” “Now you are clean,” (St. John 15: 3;) a greater knowledge of spiritual things, “Now we know,” (St. John 16: 30;) and a greater affection and devotion to their Divine Master. All cried out with St. Peter, “Etiam si oportuerit me mori tecum, non te negabo. Similiter et omnes discipuli dixerunt.” “Though I should die with Thee, I will not deny Thee; and in like manner said all the disciples.” (St. Matt. 26: 35.)

APPLICATION.—You will experience these blessed effects in proportion to your earnestness and fidelity to the pious practices pointed out in the two preceding Meditations. Be, then, very faithful to them.

COLLOQUY with Blessed John Berchmanns, who derived such advantage from his frequent communions, on account of the great care with which he prepared for them. (Life of B. John Berchmanns, by the Rev. Father Vanderspeeten, S.J. Louvain, Fonteyn, 1865.)

THE PRECIOUS GIFTS THAT JESUS CHRIST GIVES US

IN HOLY COMMUNION

1st Prel. Imagine you hear Jesus Christ saying these words, "If thou didst know the gift of God." (St. John 4: 10.)

2d Prel. Beg the grace of really understanding the precious gifts that Jesus bestows on us in Holy Communion.

POINT I

GIFT OF AN IMMENSE LOVE

CONSIDERATION.— We rarely see a man carry his love for a friend to such a point as to sacrifice his fortune for his sake; still more rarely do we see any one sacrifice liberty and endure captivity for another's sake; and we *never* see any one sacrifice life and endure every torment for another. Our Divine Lord has done all this for us; and even that was not enough for His burning love. He chose to become our food in the Holy Communion, and to transform us into Himself by becoming one substance with Him. "He that eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood," saith He, "abideth in Me, and I in him." (St. John 6: 57.) Could He have bestowed on us a greater and more precious gift of His love?

APPLICATION.— In a few minutes Jesus will come and give me in Communion the pledge of His unspeakable love. What offering of gratitude shall I give Him in return? I will hear what the Lord God will speak in me. He will say to me, "Go, and do thou in like manner." (St. Luke 10: 37.) "Do you try to do for Me what I, your Lord and your God, have done for you? Be always ready to sacrifice all for Me — your possessions, your liberty, your very life, rather than grieve Me by the slightest deliberate venial sin."

Have I always been in this disposition? Am I now in it, habitually? What does my conscience tell me?

AFFECTIONS.— Beg earnestly of our Lord in the Holy Communion, that He may confirm you in these dispositions.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will endeavor to derive this fruit from my Communions, and will count all besides as little in comparison.

POINT II

PLEDGE OF A GLORIOUS RESURRECTION

CONSIDERATION.—“*Omnes quidem resurgemus.*” “We shall all indeed rise again,” says the Apostle; “but,” he adds, “*Sed non omnes immutabimur.*” “We shall not all be changed.” (1. Cor. 15: 51.) The bodies of the just will be resplendent, agile, impassible; those of the damned will be monstrous, heavy, and capable of every kind of suffering. Thus it will be that some will rise again to glory, and others to confusion. What a terrible alternative is before us all! Happy are those who have the pledge of a glorious resurrection. Let us rejoice, for that precious pledge is given to us in Holy Communion. By it the germ is planted in our flesh. Such is the teaching of the Church, who repeats it to us by the mouth of the priest every time he says, after having given Holy Communion, “O sacred Feast! in which the pledge of future glory is given to us,” alluding to those words of Jesus Christ, “He that eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up in the last day.” (St. John 6: 55.)

APPLICATION.— The thought that through Holy Communion we shall enjoy a life of glory and happiness for both our body and soul ought to make us long earnestly for it. And we can attain the highest de-

grees of that blissful glory. "For," says St. Paul, "star differeth from star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead." (1. Cor. 15: 41, 42.) What is it that will increase this splendor? Evidently the frequent, and especially the *fervent*, reception of the Holy Eucharist.

AFFECTIONS.—Acts of faith and hope with regard to these consoling and encouraging truths.

RESOLUTIONS.—Never omit a Communion for which permission has been granted.

POINT III

PLEDGE OF A HIGHER GLORY IN HEAVEN

CONSIDERATION.—Besides giving us a pledge of a glorious resurrection, the Holy Communion will bring us an increase of glory and bliss in heaven. This we can easily understand; for the Apostle tells us the glory and capacity for enjoyment for each of us will be in proportion to his good works. He will "render to every man according to his works." (St. Matt. 16: 27.) It is charity only which gives supernatural merit to our good works, and these must increase in proportion to our charity; and as the immediate and principal effect of Holy Communion is to increase charity within us, it evidently follows that in frequent Communion we shall find a great treasure of merit, and obtain a high degree of glory in heaven.

COLLOQUY with St. Stanislaus Kostka, who had the happiness of receiving Communion twice from the hands of angels.

THE WONDERFUL EFFECTS

OF HOLY COMMUNION

1st Prel. Imagine you hear Jesus Christ saying these words, "Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you." (St. John 6: 54.)

2d Prel. Ask the grace of knowing and experiencing the wonderful effects of Holy Communion.

POINT I

IT PRESERVES AND INCREASES THE PURITY OF OUR SOULS

CONSIDERATION.—It is of faith that Holy Communion remits many venial sins to those who receive it with fitting dispositions, and that it purifies their souls from many stains which render them less pleasing in the eyes of their Lord. It is of faith again that it preserves them from falling back into sin; first, by diminishing the violence of their passions and temptations — the two sources of all sin — and then by infusing new light into their souls showing them the power of sin, and inspiring them with a hatred of it, and giving them fresh energy to resist it. This is why we find such an extraordinary purity of soul in so many Christians living in the midst of the temptations of the world. Frequent Communion has bestowed this grace on them. What wonders has it worked in you?

APPLICATION.—To make sure of obtaining the full benefit of Holy Communion, which we receive regularly every week, we should adopt that beautiful custom of St. Aloysius, who went to Communion every week. He endeavored to pass the first part of the week well, to show his gratitude to Jesus; and the second part, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, to make the

best preparation he could to receive Him again. Let us do the same, and Holy Communion will become for us, as it did to him, an infallible means of attaining a high degree of purity of soul and very great perfection.

AFFECTIONS.—Thanksgiving to St. Aloysius, who has bequeathed to us this pious practice. Beg of him to obtain for you grace to be faithful to it after his example.

RESOLUTIONS.—Endeavor to carry it out at least during some weeks.

POINT II

IT PRESERVES AND INCREASES THE VIGOR OF OUR SOUL

CONSIDERATION.—Not only does Holy Communion keep our soul pure and pleasing in the sight of God, but it gives it an extraordinary vigor. Our Lord signifies this by giving Himself to us under the species of bread and wine; and as the life of our body depends on its union with the soul, so does the supernatural life of our soul depend on its union with God by the bond of love. The closer this union, the more vigorous is the soul; and by Holy Communion the soul is more intimately united with Jesus Christ, says St. Cyprian, than when two pieces of wax are melted into one. Our Divine Lord also tells us so when He says, “He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me, and I in him.” (St. John 6: 57.)

APPLICATION.—Let us give glory to God; let us remember with deep gratitude how often our Communion has strengthened and preserved us in difficulties and temptations. It will, we trust, enable us to persevere in our holy vocation, and obtain eternal happiness.

AFFECTIONS.—Gratitude, veneration, and ardent desire for Holy Communion.

RESOLUTIONS.— To communicate as frequently as is permitted to us, but always with great attention and devotion.

POINT III

IT ELEVATES AND PERFECTS OUR SOULS

CONSIDERATION.— The most wonderful effect of Holy Communion is, that it changes us, so to speak, into Jesus Christ, making us live in Him and be made like to Him; thus anticipating that which St. John tells us we shall be one day in glory, "*Similes ei erimus.*" St. Thomas thus beautifully explains this truth: "As an offshoot from a good tree, when grafted upon a wild one, draws out its bitter taste, and makes it bear good fruit, so the body of Jesus Christ, when ingrafted in us, corrects our faults, communicates its own excellence, and enables us to bring forth fruits of justice like unto those which He performs Himself."

APPLICATION.— Let us rejoice at the thought of the immense blessings which Holy Communion confers on us. But never let us forget that our share in them will be in proportion to the preparation we make for it, and the dispositions with which we approach it. These we have pointed out in a preceding Meditation, (pp. 563-566.) Put them in practice to-day.

COLLOQUY with the Blessed Virgin endowed by God with such glorious prerogatives and eminent perfections at the moment of the Incarnation of His Eternal Word.

WONDERS THAT JESUS CHRIST WORKS IN US,

IN GIVING HIMSELF TO US IN HOLY COMMUNION

1st Prel. Imagine you hear king David saying in prophecy, "He hath made a remembrance of His wonderful works." (Psalm 110: 4.)

2d Prel. Ask the grace of prizing as you ought the wonders wrought in you by the Holy Eucharist.

POINT I

MIRACLE OF LOVE

CONSIDERATION.—"Majorem hac dilectionem nemo habet, ut animam suam ponat quis pro amicis suis." "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (St. John 15: 13.) He willed to give us this proof of love from His entrance into the world. But death came to separate us from Him. He could not bear this separation, and decreed that, after dying for us, He would still dwell with us to the end of time, and gave Himself to us for food, feeding us with His body and His blood; and as the means of carrying out this miracle of love, He instituted the Blessed Eucharist, the Holy Communion.

APPLICATION.—How many times has this miracle of God's love been renewed in you? Count, if you can, the number of your Communions, and then ask yourself what marvels of devotion and generosity for Jesus Christ they have produced in you in return; or rather, how it is you are still so lukewarm, so ungenerous in His holy service. Seek for the cause of this, and try to remedy it.

AFFECTIONS.—Humble yourself, ask forgiveness. Awaken in your heart an ardent desire to correspond more generously with the love of Jesus.

RESOLUTIONS.— Never to depart from the holy Table until you have laid upon it the offering of some generous sacrifice as a testimony of your love.

POINT II

MIRACLE OF POWER

CONSIDERATION.— The miracle of God's omnipotence shines forth no less than His love in Holy Communion. No effort of human intelligence can sound its depths. Who can comprehend how, under the appearance of bread which is no longer bread, we can really receive Jesus Christ in body and soul, such as He is in heaven; or how many millions of people can receive at the same moment this same Jesus Christ without His being divided; or how, when the Host is broken, Jesus Christ is entire in each part, and even in each morsel of each part; or how, when the accidents of bread have disappeared, Jesus Christ is no longer present in the Host?

APPLICATION.— However impenetrable and impossible all these miracles may appear to us, we must have an entire and immovable faith in this mystery; and our merit will be so much greater before God, because we not only believe in what we do not see, but we believe in spite of the evidence of our eyes, our taste, and all our senses. To do this is perfect faith. Let us avail ourselves of the easy means of increasing the treasure of our merits by making frequent acts of faith concerning this wonderful mystery, either in words or by signs, bowing our knees or devoutly bending our head before the Blessed Sacrament, or even before the place where it reposes.

AFFECTIONS.— Acts of faith, admiration, and adoration.

RESOLUTIONS.— Contemplating the miracles which God works in order to come to me, I resolve to make every possible effort to receive Him worthily.

POINT III

MIRACLE OF PATIENCE

CONSIDERATION.— Another miracle, which strikes the mind of any one who thinks of the atrocious insults given to Jesus in the Sacrament of His love, is the patience with which He endures them. If we consider the injuries done to Him through Communion alone, they are numerous and revolting: injuries from impious men, who horribly profane the Blessed Eucharist; injuries from heretics, who blaspheme it; injuries from Catholics, some who despise Communion, some who approach it with disgust, with terrible lukewarmness, or with the conviction that they will bring our Lord into a heart possessed by the devil. And Jesus takes no vengeance! He bears all these outrages, and He has borne them for centuries with invincible patience.

APPLICATION.— Have always before your mind this miracle of patience and of sweetness, and you will labor with more energy and success to correct your hastiness, rudeness, and temper, if it were only with the view of offering some consolation to the desolate heart of Jesus. Offer Him to-day in Holy Communion some generous resolutions.

COLLOQUY with our Lord.

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